Bridging the post-conflict gap

Capacity development in countries affected by fragility – a case study of the Accelerated Learning Programme in Liberia

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Abstract

This study discusses the dilemma of capacity development in the post-conflict response to the education sector in Liberia. The discussion is based on the premise that there is a gap in the aid architecture which poses a great challenge for sustainable development in the post-conflict phase. With the aim of bridging this gap the objective of the study is to examine the possibilities and obstacles for humanitarian organisations to increase focus on capacity development in post-conflict education programmes. The focus on capacity development is in opposition to the prevailing practice which emphasises a service delivery approach. A change of focus from service-delivery to capacity development is argued to be an important factor for the perspective of sustainability.

The discussion is based on data collected during a qualitative research conducted in Liberia through a case study. The research includes document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews as well as participant observation. The case of the study is the post-conflict education program Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) as it has been implemented by the humanitarian organisation Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Liberia.

With a departure point in an institutionalist world culture approach, which opens up for the consideration of global/local dynamics, it is discussed how global initiatives - as the Education for All goals - are influencing the national reform processes in the education sector in Liberia. Based on an analysis of the components of the NRC ALP it is argued that the humanitarian organisations play a central role in this process. In continuation of the analysis the study concludes that the global goals themselves constitute a major obstacle for sustainable capacity development.

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Abbreviations

ACS	American Colonization Society
AL	Accelerated Learning
ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
CEO	County Education Officer
COPE	Complimentary Opportunities for Primary Education
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEO	District Education Officer
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECOMOG	The Cease-fire Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFA	Education for All
EO	Education Officer
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EU	European Union
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOL	Government of Liberia
GPI	Gender Parity Index
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
JHS	Junior High School
LPERP	Liberian Primary Education Recovery Program
LTTP	Liberia Teacher Training Program
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRESET	Pre-service Training
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy

PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RREP	Rapid Response Education Programme
SHS	Senior High School
SMC	School Management Committee
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TTI	Teacher Training Institution
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report
YEP	Youth Education Pack

1 Introduction

After 11th September 2001 there has been an increased focus on security in the Western world and the emergence of the categories *fragile states* or *countries affected by fragility* in the international development discourse is often related to this development (Bøås & Jennings, 2005 ; Mosselson, Wheaton, & Frisoli, 2009). Within this recent development there has been an increased focus on targeting countries affected by fragility and conflict in order to stabilise the countries and minimise the potential threat they might cause. Education is believed to be a positive factor in the mitigation of fragility (Baxter & Bethke, 2009; Bethke, 2009; Davies, 2009; INEE, 2011b; Mosselson, et al., 2009) and hence education has during the last decade become a priority by the humanitarian organisations in their emergency and post-conflict responses. In spite of the endeavours to stabilise the fragile states the 2011 World Development Report (WDR) (WB, 2011) nevertheless states that none of the countries affected by conflict and fragility will manage to reach any of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 (WB, 2011). In terms of reaching the MDG number 2 of Universal Primary Education (UPE) this has severe consequences as 42 % of the 72 million out-of-school children are living in conflict affected countries (UNESCO, 2011).

This situation raises several questions but the most critical one might be the issue of how to stabilise the fragile situations and following this one, the question of the appropriateness of the aid architecture to target this stabilisation. At the very centre of this question is the dilemma of whether service-delivery or capacity development is the aim of the implementing and financing organisations operating in the fragile contexts (Davies, 2009). In order to understand the complexity of this dilemma light has to be shed on some of the dimensions which are in evidence. In the following this will be done by elaborating on: 1) how fragility is defined with an emphasis on the post-conflict context; 2) the aid architecture and the gap which it poses for the post-conflict context; 3) and finally by elaborating on the capacity development in fragile situations and the importance of sustainability in this regard.

1.1 Fragility

Before elaborating on the appropriateness of the aid architecture to target mitigation of fragility the term *fragility* should be defined. The concept of fragility has been widely discussed due to its normative undertone (Bøås & Jennings, 2005). Morten Bøås and

Kathleen Jennings (2005) argue "*to say that something 'fails' or 'is failing' is a normative judgement that is only meaningful in comparison to something else"'* (Bøås & Jennings, 2005 p. 388) and hence the Western state becomes the normative goal for this comparison. In line with this it is important to bear in mind that no matter the condition of a particular state there will always be different perspectives and different interests within the state and thus one have to ask: for whom is the state failing? (Bøås & Jennings, 2005). Due to this complexity and the general objection from the labelled states focus has shifted from fragile *states* to fragile *situations* (Mosselson, et al., 2009). By making this shift it becomes possible to broaden the approach and identify some of the underlying mechanisms and structures that are causing the fragility. The definition developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has become the common denominator within the field (OECD, 2008) (see figure 1.1).

Category	**Scenario**	
Declining	Arrested development	Prolonged crisis or impasse; stagnation with low levels of effectiveness and legitimacy
	Deterioration	Declining levels of governance effectiveness leading to lower legitimacy, rising risk of violence or collapse
Stabilising	Post-conflict transition	Low levels of effectiveness, transitory legitimacy, recent violence, humanitarian crisis
	Early recovery	Gradual improvement; rising levels of effectiveness and legitimacy, declining international resource requirements, emergence from conflict or other crises

Figure 1.1 OECD/DAC categories of fragility

A fragile situation is being characterised into one of the four categories based among others on the levels of *capacity* and *will* within the government;

> *"Operative definitions of fragility used by the DAC and several aid agencies emphasise the lack of capacity (capability, effectiveness) and willingness (will, legitimacy) to perform key government functions for the benefit of all:*
>
> *• Capacity in this context means having the core features that enable the state to mobilise resources for such key objectives as economic development and poverty reduction. These core features include territorial control and presence, effective exercise of political power, basic competence in economic management and sufficient administrative capacity for policy implementation.*
>
> *• Willingness refers to an explicit political commitment to policies supporting human welfare. It is reflected in actions and outcomes that are implemented*

following an inclusive approach (non-discrimination). Legitimacy concerns the sources of support for the state and the regime" (OECD, 2008 p. 14).

Depending on the particular situation the development through the four phases can be rather unpredictable and non-linear. The post-conflict transition and early recovery phases[1] are of particular interest for the focus on poverty reduction in fragile situations as it is characterised by the government demonstrating will and legitimacy to stabilise the peace and re-establish the basic state functions but nevertheless the capability to do so might still be limited (OECD, 2008). From their synthesis on the emerging literature within the field Mosselson et al. (2009) identify that weak institutions can be a driver of fragility and due to this observation education becomes an important factor in fragile situations.

1.2 The aid architecture and mitigation of fragility

Post-conflict countries are especially disadvantaged in regard to reaching the international goals because they fall into a grey zone between humanitarian and development aid and interventions (Rose & Greeley, 2006). The countries need long-term support for planning and programming in order to make the institutional changes needed to stabilise the peace but at the same time the post-conflict context poses a great risk for the donors. The risk is due to the dual accountability dilemma which the donors face. The donors need to be accountable to the receiver country in the sense that they ensure a stable flow of aid but at the same time they have to be accountable to the taxpayers in the donor country (WB, 2011). The donors need results which they can present the taxpayers and make good arguments to why it is reasonable to spend the money on a foreign country. In the post-conflict situation the state functions and administration are weak and this means that there is a higher risk involved if donors commit to long term funding. The result is that the aid flow to countries affected by fragility is much more volatile than the aid flow to other low income countries and this hampers the stabilisation and development of the post-conflict countries. The aid and interventions are often short-term and parallel to the national institutions and this hinders the development of the weak public administration (WB, 2011). The aid architecture is a great challenge to overcome in this situation and even the multilateral agencies are not designed to make the necessary interventions in the fragile contexts. The problem with the funding gap is that it might refuel the conflict as the government is not able to ensure a proper level of

[1] The terms used for these phases differ among the international organisations and in order to minimise further confusion the term post-conflict will be used as reference to the stabilising phase after a conflict

service delivery (UNESCO, 2011). The funding gap, which the dual accountability dilemma creates, constitutes a problem because when the humanitarian organisations are phasing out their short-term programmes due to their emergency mandate there is usually not a sufficient level of capacity and resources within the government in the post-conflict country to take over the provision of public services needed to rebuild the country. At the same time the above described reluctance to engage in longer-term commitments prevents the adequate amount of support needed for the post-conflict country to stabilise properly. Consequently the country might relapse into conflict because the expectations to the peace dividend are not met when the government ca not provide public services as health and education. In order to target this problematic situation the question of service-delivery or capacity development becomes central. The humanitarian response is usually characterised by being primarily service-delivery oriented due to the acute need of these services in the affected country. Nevertheless it is argued in this study that the failure of the aid architecture to promote the much needed development in the post-conflict situation suggests that it might be of great relevance to consider an increased focus on capacity development within the humanitarian programmes.

1.3 Capacity development & the post-conflict context

As illustrated above capacity is a determining factor in the categorisation of fragility and hence also an important factor to strengthen in order to stabilise a fragile situation. There has been a tendency to measure the level of capacity within a country on a Western scale and to see capacity as the extent to which governments are capable of ensuring accountability of the resources received from donors (Brinkerhoff, 2007). This definition is far too narrow and it is necessary to understand capacity within a broader scope where the national political and social context is taken into account (Brinkerhoff, 2007). A broader definition is captured by OECD/DAC (2006) which defines capacity as "*the ability of individuals, organisations and societies to make effective and efficient use of resources, in order to achieve their own goals on a sustainable basis"* (OECD/DAC in Davies, 2009 p. 16). Understanding capacity development in broader terms is also emphasised in both the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000b) and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness ("Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness," 2005) which are stressing the importance of capacity development at both the level of government and civil society in order to reach development objectives and meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict and instability and hence increase the prospects of sustainable development (Bethke, 2009). Capacity development interventions constitute a considerably large percentage of the donor aid but nevertheless "*the development*

of sustainable capacity is still one of the most difficult areas of international development practice [as] *investment in capacity development is not seen as leading to quick or easily measurable returns"* (Davies, 2009 p. 9). Capacity development is nevertheless extremely important in countries affected by fragility and conflict due to the heavy task of rebuilding the state. Due to the disadvantaged situation of post-conflict countries sustainable development is increasingly important to consider when programming in this context. Sustainable development in relation to implementation of programmes can basically be understood as whether programmes will survive when the implementing and financing organisations are pulling out and whether there is a spill over effect in terms of positive change in areas related to the given program which all together increases the socio-economic development. In order to promote sustainable development a holistic approach to programming should be taken and issues like capacity, equity, partnership, participation and ownership should be considered at both individual, institutional and societal levels (Smith,(2005). In countries affected by fragility and conflict these issues become increasingly important as horizontal inequality[2] is believed to be a root course of fragility (Brinkerhoff, 2007; Dupuy, 2009; Mosselson, et al., 2009). The horizontal inequality can be seen as unequal access to basic services as health and education and capacity development at all levels of society becomes imperative in order for the civil society to claim its rights and increase the demand for these basic services and for the state to deliver them.

1.4 Objective of the study

Based on the previous paragraphs it becomes clear that the aid architecture constitutes a great obstacle for countries in the post-conflict phase. Within this frame it is interesting to examine what are the obstacles for humanitarian organisations to increase the focus on capacity development when they are implementing programmes in the post-conflict phase. Capacity development has to be relevant for the context in order to have a sustainable perspective and due to the previous mentioned central role of education in the mitigation process it is an obvious choice to focus on educational reform processes. Education reforms in the post-conflict context should be seen in the light of the general trends of educational reforms which have changed dramatically since the 1990s under the increased influence of globalisation. The pressure by the international community on low-income countries to make

[2] Horizontal inequality in this case means that there are inequalities between groups of society for instance male/female, urban/rural, different ethnic groups etc.

education reforms has increased with international agreements as Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals and the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Scholars within the field argue that these international agreements have lead to an increased convergence in the form and content of the reforms based on *best practices* and *reference societies* (Burde, 2004; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). International implementing and financing organisations play a central role in this development as they carry a certain discourse based on the international agreements which is then determining for the implementation and financing of educational programmes (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). From an institutionalist perspective the implementing and financing organisations are promoting world-cultural principles which "*have shaped the frames that orient other actors, including states"* (Boli & Thomas in Burde, 2004 p. 176). Within this perspective international aid organisations are given a central role in the spreading of certain ideas which can explain the simultaneous development in very different contexts.

Education plays a central role in the process of state building as "*The school is the premier institutional site of modernity, intervening in the thought of the child who is to be the future citizen"* (Popkewitz, 2004 p. ix). Due to this important role of the education system in the state-building process educational reform is among the first initiatives to be taken in the rebuilding of countries in the post-conflict phase. However, in spite of the increased focus on educational reforms research shows that practical changes are not following the reforms and hence the outcome of the reforms is limited. The reasons for this situation are many but a central issue highlighted by Linda Chisholm and Ramon Leyendecker (2008) is that the international aid organisations are not having enough focus on the context and actual capacity in the given setting but are rather concentrating on reaching the international economic and social goals.

Based on this rather complex area of education reforms capacity development in relation to the reform process becomes a central issue to explore in the post-conflict programme implementation by humanitarian organisations. The objective of this study is therefore to explore whether a temporary post-conflict education programme like Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) has the potential to contribute to the strengthening of the emerging education sector in Liberia by developing capacity relevant for three central reforms namely, reaching UPE, the reform of teacher training institutions, and decentralisation of the administration and management of the education sector. ALP is implemented by several

partners in Liberia but for this study the ALP as it has been implemented by one of the humanitarian organisations namely, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), has been chosen. It is relevant to examine whether the ALP has potential to develop capacity which is relevant for the three reform processes and hence the education sector. This is because a positive outcome would strengthen the argument that humanitarian organisations should target capacity development in order to bridge the gap which the current aid architecture creates. The humanitarian organisations are a part of the aid architecture and this study argues that it is no longer enough that education has been included in the humanitarian response. A long-term perspective on education is necessary within the framework of a changing the overall aid architecture. As capacity development is one of the most difficult areas of international development practice (Davies, 2009) it is nevertheless interesting to understand which obstacles there might be for the ALP to develop capacity relevant for the three reform processes. By identifying these obstacles a more nuanced picture of the difficulties would become visible. Hopefully this could differentiate the debate of the appropriateness of an increased focus on capacity development in spite of its immediate status as one of the most difficult areas of development practice. The three reform processes have been chosen for three reasons: 1) they are central for the overall reform of the education sector in Liberia; 2) they are reflecting global tendencies which originate from the international agreements as EFA and MDG; and 3) the ALP has components which seem to reflect the three areas. The study has been guided by the following two research questions:

1. *To what extend does the NRC ALP have the potential to develop capacity relevant for the education sector in Liberia and what are the perspectives of sustainability?*

2. *What are the obstacles for the NRC ALP to develop capacity and how can this be understood in the light of the world culture dynamics?*

Before moving on to the presentation of the analytical framework, which will be used to examine the ALP in Liberia, the country and content of the ALP should be briefly introduced.

1.5 Liberia as a case

Liberia is a well-chosen country case as it shares several of the above presented dilemmas. In 2003 the country came out of a 14 years long civil war which has left it in ruins. Since then there has been great efforts to rebuild the country and the international donor

community has been widely represented. Liberia has been severely afflicted by the gap between humanitarian and development aid and only a small share of the received aid has been budget support as most of the aid given is still humanitarian (WB, 2009). The public sector in Liberia is weak and the challenge is not merely to reconstruct the public sector but rather to establish it. Capacity development is therefore a core feature for progress but the long-term donor commitments are scarce. This has among others had severe consequences for the recovery of the education sector (UNESCO, 2011). One of the attempts to face the challenges in the education sector has been the implementation of the ALP as part of the overall national education strategies to reach UPE. ALP is an education programme which is often implemented in post-conflict countries because it targets the over-aged children whose educational opportunities have been disrupted by the conflict. The programme accelerates the primary school curriculum to half the time and hence the over-aged children have the possibility of catching up. ALP in Liberia has been a large scale programme implemented by several different partners. This has among others been an UN agency, development organisations and humanitarian organisations. For this study the ALP implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), one of the humanitarian actors, has been examined. The context of Liberia and the scope of ALP will be further elaborated in chapter four and five respectively.

1.6 Outline of the study

Chapter two outlines the theoretical framework for the study. Firstly capacity development in fragile states is explained and based on this an analytical framework is developed. Secondly the world culture theory is introduced and the concepts central for the analysis are presented.

Chapter three present the methodological framework for the study. This includes a justification for the data collection and the sampling. The interview guide is presented and the procedure for categorising and analysing of the data is clarified. Limitations as well as possible bias are also accounted for.

Chapter four presents the education sector of Liberia. This includes a brief historical introduction, and a more thorough presentation of the education sector including the education system, organisation and management of the sector, and the national educational strategies of the government.

Chapter five presents the ALP as a worldwide response to education in post-conflict situations with an emphasis on the pedagogical philosophy of the programme. Secondly the Liberian ALP is presented, and thirdly the NRC ALP as well as the components which it contains are described and compared to the national ALP.

Chapter six presents the findings from the interviews. The chapter is divided into sub chapters reflecting the NRC ALP components. Within these the data is categorised into the groups of involved actors in the education sector.

Chapter seven, eight and nine analyse whether the three NRC ALP components are developing capacity relevant for the three reform processes. This is done on the basis of the analytical framework developed in chapter two. Within each chapter the perspective of sustainability is discussed. The central elements of the world culture theory are drawn upon throughout the analyses in order to offer explanations of the findings.

Chapter ten provides concluding remarks in relation to the research questions and discusses to what extent the ALP has potential to contribute to a sustainable transition out of the post-conflict phase.

2 Analytical framework

In this chapter the analytical framework for the analysis of ALP will be developed. In the following the literature on capacity development will be discussed. Based on this, characteristics of capacity development in fragile situations and criteria for the donor intervention will be deduced and these will constitute the analytical framework for the analysis. In order to sensitise such a framework even further to the fragile context it is necessary to open up the for the dimension of the role which the international organisations play at the national levels as they to a large extend are fulfilling the public service tasks of the government. Such a dimension can be added to the analytical framework by integrating the perspective of world culture theory which provides a framework for understanding the dynamics between the world culture and the nation states which the international organisations play a vital part in (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997).

2.1 Capacity Development

Capacity development has become a buzzword in the international development discourse and various definitions and approaches are in use. In order to clarify the understanding of capacity development which will be used in this study the concept will be discussed taking a departure point in a synthesis recently made on the topic by Anton De Grauwe (2009). He states that in spite of the indistinctness the concept suffers from due to the careless use there seems to be a consensus on the approach to capacity development within the international community. This consensus will in the following be discussed in relation to the context of fragile situations.

2.1.1 Capacity development in fragile situations

From the synthesis by De Grauwe (2009) it is stated that the first point of consensus in relation to the term capacity development is that there has been a change in the articulation of the concept which emphasises the importance of capacity development interventions taking departure point in the capacities already exiting in the country in concern. This is shown in the change of vocabulary from capacity *building* to capacity *development*. The use of the word *development* indicates that the capacity development intervention is adding on to the current capacity rather than building capacity from scratch. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistant Committee (OECD-DAC) which is

in many ways a leading agency when it comes to developing tools and working definitions for the practitioners in the developing field describes the change in articulation as follows;

> *"'Capacity development' is understood as the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. The phrase capacity development is used advisedly in preference to the traditional capacity building. The 'building' metaphor suggests a process starting with a plain surface and involving the step-by-step erection of a new structure, based on a preconceived design. Experience suggests that capacity is not successfully enhanced in this way"* (OECD, 2006 p. 12).

OECD is not the only actor indicating this change of terms also the Paris Declaration ("Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness," 2005) is emphasising capacity *development* as the appropriate approach rather than mere technical assistance. Secondly there has been a change in the approach to the subject of the capacity development. It has increasingly been recognised that it is not effective to focus capacity development interventions only towards individuals but rather the context the individual works within should be targeted. This approach implies that the focus should be not only on increasing the technical skills of the individuals but also on the quality of the organisation that the individuals work within and the enabling environment in which the organisations navigate. Again OECD-DAC reflects this consensus in their publications:

> *"Capacity development involves much more than enhancing the knowledge and skills of individuals. It depends crucially on the quality of the organisations in which they work. In turn, the operations of particular organisations are influenced by the enabling environment – the structures of power and influence and the institutions – in which they are embedded."* (OECD, 2006 p. 7)

Apart from the three levels of individuals, organisations and institutions emphasised here the overall context should also be taken into consideration. The generally agreed upon consensus emphasises that being aware of the interaction between these three levels is crucial in order to make successful capacity development interventions. UNESCO uses the following definitions for the organisational and institutional levels which also will be the definitions used in this thesis:

> ***"Organizational capacity:*** *resources (human, intellectual, financial, physical, infrastructural, and so on) and other organizational characteristics (structure,*

> *mandate, management, leadership, and so on) that influence an organization's performance.*
>
> ***Institutional environment:*** *the environment and conditions – beyond the capacity of an individual organization – necessary for organizations and individuals to demonstrate their capacity, including formal institutions (laws, policies, membership rules, and so on), informal institutions (customs, norms, and so on), and social capital and infrastructure"* (De Grauwe, 2009 p. 42).

In the case of the education sector of Liberia this means that the individual level is the individuals working within the education sector. The organisational level concerns the ministry of education in Liberia and the institutional level is about the norms, practices and regulation which seem to be present in relation to administration and public management of the education sector.

Thirdly De Grauwe argues that the state has been rediscovered as an indispensable actor in the development process. By this is meant that in the development history there has been a tendency to down scale the involvement of the state because it was accused of being responsible of poor performance. Recently there has been a reemphasis on including the state as main responsible actor for development. This is among others one of the cornerstones in the Paris Declaration ("Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness," 2005) which highlights the state responsibility in relation to capacity development as follows:

> *"Capacity development is the responsibility of partner countries with donors playing a support role. It needs not only to be based on sound technical analysis, but also to be responsive to the broader social, political and economic environment, including the need to strengthen human resources."* ("Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness," 2005 p. 4)

These three points of consensus which De Grauwe deduces on capacity development are guiding for the implementation of capacity development programs today, but the work of De Grauwe applies to capacity development in developing countries in general and the question is whether the recent consensus also applies to fragile contexts.

Scholars working with capacity development of the education sector in fragile situations are in line with De Grauwe emphasising the importance of understanding capacity development in a broad sense which is including multiple levels besides the individual. Nevertheless it is in some cases stressed that in the fragile situation there tends to be a general

lack of capacity on several levels and in most sectors, which means that there might not be much capacity to develop from the outset (Brinkerhoff, 2007). This should not lead to a neglect of recognition of the local knowledge of the context as *"capacity should be viewed as a mutual learning process where all involved work, plan and agree on activities and ways forward together"* (Bethke, 2009 p. 27). Often capacity development interventions will focus on the individual and the organisational levels but it is nonetheless important to consider the enabling environment when planning in the education sector as this is influencing the actions of the individuals and organisations (Davies, 2009). The third point in the consensus which De Grauwe describes is problematic to apply to fragile states as the state per definition (cf. the DAC definitions on fragile states) is weak and might be unwilling to ensure basic service delivery to its citizens. In fragile situations it might therefore to a greater extend be necessary and beneficial to involve non-state actors in the capacity development interventions as these are usually filling in the gap in terms of service delivery (Bethke, 2009; Brinkerhoff, 2007). In post-conflict situations compared to states in the declining phases, the state might be willing to fulfil the obligations to the civil society in terms of service-delivery but might lack the capacity to do this (OECD, 2008). Due to the high expectations to the 'peace dividend' in societies coming out of conflict it might as well be reasonable to involve non-state actors in order to deliver the basic services and hence indirectly restore the state legitimacy (Bethke, 2009).

2.1.2 Characteristics of Capacity Development

In order to use the capacity development approach as an analytical framework it is necessary to specify how the concept is understood in this thesis with the emphasis on fragile situations. Scholars working with capacity development in fragile situations agree that the concept is the same as in non fragile situations and then on top comes the issues relating to fragility. This means first and foremost that capacity development should be understood as a process between levels of society which is emphasised above. Apart from this capacity development is also a process of change. De Grauwe argues that capacity development should be understood as a process of change which is intrinsic in itself and hence capacity development no matter what capacities it involves is the goal itself. Lynn Davies (2009) is stating that capacity development should be seen as a way of *"unlearning previous behaviours or at least regulating behaviour that has contributed to fragility"* (Davies, 2009 p. 21). She is then emphasising the idea that capacity development is a process of change but she is stressing that it is a change with a certain purpose. Brinkerhoff (2007) is supporting the

addition of *purpose* as he is arguing that *"the legacy of these dysfunctional practices often hinders efforts to set fragile states on a new trajectory"* (Brinkerhoff, 2007 p. 8). Brinkerhoff is emphasising that the process of capacity development furthermore needs to be endogenous in order to be sustainable. There is in general a tendency among donors to focus on the supply side rather than taking into account if there is actually a demand side that can sustain the changes which the intervention supposedly brings (Davies, 2009). By understanding capacity development as an endogenous process it is possible to promote demands from the country in question rather than imposing foreign ideas. This issue is also very much in line with the general acknowledgement of the importance of national ownership in order to obtain sustainable development which is especially emphasised in the Accra Agenda for Action ("Accra Agenda for Action," 2008)[3]. Finally capacity development in fragile situations is about restoring the state functions and legitimacy of the government to avoid further fragility (Davies, 2009). Especially the last point is important for capacity development in fragile situations as the very characteristics of fragility is the lack of capacity and will by the government to provide service delivery to the citizens.

2.1.3 Criteria for the donor intervention

In order to increase the possible success of the capacity development intervention there are certain factors on the external partner side which are crucial. This involves at least four factors. Firstly there is an agreement in the literature on capacity development in both fragile and non fragile situations that it is not possible for one actor to target all the levels of society (Brinkerhoff, 2007; Davies, 2009; De Grauwe, 2009). It is therefore beneficial to cooperate among external partners in order to target as broadly as possible. Moreover it is also more realistic to achieve changes in the political sphere if external partners collaborate to increase the pressure on the government (Brinkerhoff, 2007). In line with this is the second factor which emphasises the imperative of working within and towards common strategies (Bethke, 2009; Brinkerhoff, 2007; Davies, 2009; De Grauwe, 2009). This implies to the overall national level as well as the local levels as the feeling of feeding into a common goal is motivating for the individual (De Grauwe, 2009). There are several initiatives internationally to ensure that external partners and interventions in a given country aim at the same direction.

[3] The concept of *endogenous demands* might be problematic to use as national plans, strategies and goals are often reflecting the global discourses and the question is hence if they can be categorised as expressions of 'real' endogenous demands (Stomquist, 2007). For the purpose of this study the concept will nevertheless be used and the origin of these endogenous demands will be subject of analysis

The overall aim of the educational capacity development intervention should according to Davies (2009) be to feed into the national strategies on state building. Besides this the third factor concerns the time frame of capacity development interventions. There is a tendency for external partners, and especially those in the humanitarian field, that too high indictors for success are put up within a far too narrow timeframe. This often leads to disappointment and the label of failure. Instead it is suggested in the literature to set up realistic time frames from the onset (Bethke, 2009; Grauwe, 2009) and find alternative solutions to stay present in the country for longer than the usual 1-3 years (De Grauwe, 2009). Finally there is in general an agreement on the importance of capacity development interventions being context specific. In the synthesis by De Grauwe (2009) he points out that the answer to lack of capacities often are training, but if the intervention is not carefully planned in accordance to the actual needs the risk is to target the training in a wrong manner and improvements will fail to happen. Davies (2009) supports this point of view by emphasising that it might not be a matter of training all those who have not yet been trained but rather focus on more specific training for those who are already trained to some degree.

In the previous sections it has been clarified that there is a general consensus on the concept of capacity development which emphasises: a change in articulation of the concept from *building* to *development*; a change in the subject of capacity development which includes various levels rather than simply the individual; a demand driven approach rather than a supply driven; and finally a reemphasis on the state as the responsible actor for development. These trends apply to fragile states except for the role of the state as this is the exact core of the fragility issue. Furthermore it has been emphasised that: feeding into national strategies; donor harmonisation; a realistic time frame; and context specific programmes are necessary issues to take into account in order for capacity development interventions to be sustainable and successful. The concept of capacity development has now been defined and the next step is to consider how it can be analysed. In order to do this some of the usual analytical frameworks for capacity development will be presented and discussed in the following section.

2.1.4 Framing a framework

Within the literature of capacity development different frameworks for analysing interventions have been developed. Brinkerhoff (2007) for instance, has developed a model for practitioners to use in order to harmonise the intervention with a realistically expected outcome. This model is very pragmatic and takes into consideration factors like required time,

degree of difficulty and complexity relating to the levels of society and the scope and depth of the change involved. Other frameworks are focusing on analysing the intervention within the levels of society including the overall context. Such a framework can be described like this: "*the individuals work within an organisational unit, which form part of public administration, which functions within a specific context"* (De Grauwe, 2009 p. 46). Rather than using an analytical framework which takes its departure point primarily in the levels within the sector it is fruitful to include several characteristics for capacity development whereas the dimension of the levels constitutes one of them. The framework used in this study is deduced from the here examined literature on capacity development and it takes into account the special requirements of the post-conflict setting.

The framework is divided into two categories: criteria for the donor intervention (Table 2.1) and characteristics of capacity development in fragile situations (Table 2.2). The criteria for the donor intervention will be used to analyse whether the NRC ALP through their implementation is laying the foundation for the programme to develop capacity. The second part of the framework will be used to analyse whether the NRC ALP is actually developing capacity relevant for the reform processes through its components.

Table 2.1 Criteria for donor intervention

Criteria for the donor intervention	There has to be cooperation among partners
	There has to be common strategies
	There has to be a realistic time frame
	It has to be a context-specific interventions

Table 2.2 Characteristics of capacity development

Characteristics of capacity development	It is a process between levels of society
	It is a process of unlearning previous behaviour which fosters change
	It has to be based on endogenous demands
	It has to restore state functions and legitimacy

In the following part the world culture theory will be presented as a way to understand the dynamics between the global discursive level and the national level. The role of international development organisations within these dynamics plays a central role for the later analysis and discussion of the NRC ALP in Liberia.

2.2 World Culture Theory

World Culture theory takes its departure point in institutionalism and is - as Meyer, Boli, Thomas and Ramirez (1997) are expressing it - evolving around the idea that a world culture exists and is shaping the norms and practices around the establishment and legitimation of the nation state including the education system. For the purpose of the world culture theory as used in this study the analytical framework is based on the perspectives of Meyer et al. (1997). It should nevertheless be noted that world culture theory is subject to a strong theoretical debate where the question of contextual influence is at the centre. Meyer et al. are at the one hand arguing that the world culture is increasing the worldwide convergence of patterns of educational structures and organisation as well as expansion at all levels of the education system which leads to a *"dissemination of a world-level developmental cultural account and educational ideology"* (Fiala and Landford in Schriewer & Martinez, 2004 p. 30). This dissemination of educational ideology is argued to be defining the educational development at the national level. Jürgen Schriewer and Carlos Martinez (2004) on the other hand argue that historical and cultural factors are shaping education which leads to an idiosyncratic production of knowledge. Inevitably this means that "*educational knowledge, reform policies, and developmental models elaborated and disseminated at a transnational level are refracted by each society' internal selection thresholds and needs for interpretation, which are the outcome of cultural traditions and collective mentality, as well as political forces and dominant ideologies.*" (Schriewer & Martinez, 2004 p. 50). Other researchers distinguish between the two approaches as to whether the world models are *real* or *imagined* (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

For the purpose of this study the main perspective with regards to world culture theory concerns the process of dissemination of the world models and the role that international development organisations play in this process. The intention is hence not to determine whether the world models are real or imagined but to discuss how they are affecting the educational policies and reforms in Liberia. Based on the perspective of Meyer et al. (1997) Colette Chabbott (2003) has further analysed how the world models are carried through

discourse, organizations, professionals, conferences, national frameworks for action, and local governmental and non-governmental action (Chabbott, 2003 p. 10) and how these have a reciprocally reinforcing effect on each other. World culture theory as it is described by Meyer et al. (1997) and later used by Chabbott is therefore appropriate to use in this study as it is the very dynamics of the world culture which are central.

In the following the properties of the nation state and the dynamics of the world culture will be presented in order to clarify how the world cultures are affecting the national levels of educational development. According to the Meyer et al. (1997) it is possible to deduce certain characteristics of the nation state, these are nevertheless only valid if the nation state is assumed to be "*constructions of a common wider culture, rather than as self-directed actors responding rationally to internal and external contingencies"* (Meyer, et al., 1997 p. 152). This approach to the nation state is in opposition to the prevailing understanding which presumes that nation states are rational actors acting based on what might create the better opportunities for the further maintenance of the nation state. As the construction of the nation state is based on a *common wider culture* it is an exogenously construction which encompasses certain properties.

2.2.1 Nation state properties

The properties of the nation state are first of all the process of isomorphism which indicates that in spite of differences in internal features like economic and cultural development societies tend to develop simultaneously. It is argued that this development happens because of certain tendencies in the world culture. These tendencies are world models which should be understood as institutional norms which concern anything from female equality and citizenship to rationalised economic record keeping and democracy etc. The term *world models* is in the literature often used synonymously with the term *discourses* (Burde, 2004; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Schriewer & Martinez, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). This will also be the case in this study where both terms will be used interchangeably. When a certain feature is prevailing in the nation state it is not due to an internal development but rather due to the exogenous influence of the world culture. The second property concerns rational actor hood which the nation state strives to apply to. Within the world culture the nation state is expected to be rational and responsible and hence any other form would not be acceptable. In order to actualise these features internally as well as externally the nation state can make constitutions concerning for instance rights and justice and apply for admission to

United Nations (UN) and other intergovernmental bodies. Commonly for the internal and the external attempts to act rationally is the tendency to formulate, rather uniform, goals in order to enhance the "*collective progress and individual rights and development"* (Meyer, et al., 1997 p. 153). Thirdly the process of decoupling is characteristic for the nation state according to the world culture theory as it is being presented by Meyer et al. One of the reasons for this decoupling is that the world models, which the nation state endeavours to integrate, are highly idealised and in reality not possible to live up to. Also the models are developed from an exogenous culture which tends to collide with the traditional norms and practices in the given nation state. Furthermore there are conflicting principles and inconsistency among the models which make it impossible to implement them as a fully functionally system. The decoupling process is also a question of resources available in the nation state. Countries with many resources are more likely to adapt the models into the existing norms and values whereas a country with fewer resources might be more likely to integrate the model without trying to influence it. The fourth property is the expansive structuration which Meyer et al. are defining as follows:

> *"By structuration we mean the formation and spread of explicit, rationalized, differentiated organisational forms. Here we argue that the dependence of the modern nation-state on exogenous models, coupled with the fact that these models are organized as cultural principles and visions not strongly anchored in local circumstances, generates expansive structuration at the nation-state and organizational levels."* (Meyer, et al., 1997 p. 156)

This means that organisational structures in some countries, especially those Meyer et al. refer to as the peripheral states which are those with fewer resources, are responding to the ideal of the models rather than the actual need in the country. This might for instance be the case in countries where universities are producing highly qualified candidates even though technical skills are more in demand or in the case of the development of heavy bureaucracy in the public administration. Depending on local resources and organisational capacities there is a difference in how the process of external structuration is affecting the core and peripheral countries c.f. the process of isomorphism. The four presented properties of the nation state clarify how the world culture is shaping and defining the nation state and in the following it will be elaborated how the world culture is operating.

2.2.2 Dynamics of the World Culture

The values of the world culture are rooted in the Western Enlightenment period and are emphasising progress and justice and the axiom of rationality. The UN plays a central role in defining the world models, but also what Meyer et al. are referring to as *rationalised others* are important in this regard. The rationalised others are scientists and professionals who are often affiliated with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and world bodies like UN. These are not as such actors but due to the emphasis on rationality "s*cience as authority is much more influential than scientists as an interest group"* (Meyer, et al., 1997 p. 166). The rationalised others are generating scientific and professional discourses which are taken to be rational and universal truths. The scientists and professionals get their strength from "*their authority to assimilate and develop the rationalized and universalistic knowledge that makes action and actorhood possible"* (Meyer, et al., 1997 p. 165) and are hence creating the social structural frame which organises and spreads the world models:

> *"The models of national development or human rights carried by international associations have their roots in scientific and legal knowledge, such as theories and measures of national economic development or of individual social and economic equality. Similarly diffusion among nation-states is heavily mediated by scientists and professionals who define virtuous instances, formulates models, and actively support their adoption"* (Meyer, et al., 1997 p. 166).

The models are spread by the scientists and professionals through the organisations which are influencing the nation state by closing the gaps where the state fails to implement the world culture principles. Like the UN was created after the World War II NGOs have also increased dramatically since 1945. NGOs often have a social movement character and are promoting models of human rights which means that the world culture to a greater extent than ever is influencing all aspects of social life in any given country (Chabbott, 2003). Besides this another part of the spreading mechanism is that countries are copying each other and the weak and poor countries are usually copying the rich and strong ones. In the case of education these mechanisms are working very well and the concept of e.g. school characterised by a school building and a teacher in front of the blackboard is universal. Chabbott (2003) has in her study of the construction of Education for All, based on world culture theory, analysed how the international organisations have had increasingly influence on the goals developed. The initiative of Education for All is in itself a very good example on how organisations and scientists are developing the world model of appropriate education in all countries regardless

of the national context. One of the resent changes in the approach to education, which was emphasised in Dakar in 2000, is e.g. the increased focus on quality education rather than access to education which is now imperative to many of the organisations working with education and reflected in the Education Sector Plans (ESPs) of developing countries.

2.3 Sum up on analytical framework

As mentioned earlier the purpose of capacity development in fragile situations is first and foremost to initiate change in order to avoid further fragility by restoring the state functions and legitimacy. Furthermore capacity development has to be based on endogenous demands in order to be sustainable. Both of these purposes and the concept of capacity development can be argued to be products of the world culture. They are being articulated by scientists and professionals and are integrated by international organisations and the UN as universal truths which should be guiding for implementations of programmes in developing countries which usually range as peripheral and weaker countries. Rather than digging deeper into the world model on capacity development it is of interest to use the dynamics of the world culture to understand the underlying mechanisms between the global currents and the development of the nation state. This should be done partly in order to understand the role which the international organisations are playing in the dissemination of the world cultures and partly to understand the obstacles there might be for the ALP to develop capacity which will contribute to sustainable development of the education sector in Liberia.

3 Methodology

In this chapter the methodology of the study will be presented. This includes accounting for the ontological and epistemological position of the study as well as research design and methods used to collect data in the field. Before concluding the chapter with a presentation of the validity of the findings and central limitations for the research, the guidelines used to categorise and analyse the data will be accounted for as well.

3.1 Research design

The research design of this study is based on an ontological position which takes its departure point in a constructionist understanding of the social world. This implies that there is no 'real' or objective world which can be measured but rather the phenomena of the social world are constructed by individuals through their interactions (Bryman, 2008). This position becomes self-evident as a central part of the study is to examine the influence which discursively constructed world models have on national education strategies. In continuation of this ontology the epistemological position of the study is interpretivist as the ALP is analysed on the basis of the involved actors' perception of it (Bryman, 2008). These ontological and epistemological positions require a qualitative research strategy. This implies a holistic approach to the field which emphasises the "*contextual interrelationship of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour"* (Goetz and LeCompte in Vulliamy, 1990 p. 11). This approach means that the focus of the study is on social interactions and hence the process of implementation is central (Vulliamy, 1990). A case study with condensed fieldwork has been chosen as the appropriate design for the study (Vulliamy, 1990). Robert K. Yin (2009) defines a case study as this:

> *1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that*
> - *investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when*
> - *the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.*
>
> *2. The case study inquiry*
> - *copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result*
> - *relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result*
> - *benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis* (Yin, 2009 p. 18).

The ALP has been studied in its real-life context and as the research took place in its natural setting and was not deliberately manipulated which defines the research as a natural inquiry (Patton, 2002). When the ALP is approached as an expression of the global world models the boundaries between phenomenon and context becomes blurry as they are reciprocally affecting each other. The condensed fieldwork is in opposition to the ethnographic research which requires a long term stay in the field. Lawrence Stenhouse argues that in educational research the traditional ethnographic approach is inappropriate as power relations reproducing the previous colonial powers are maintained. Rather educational research should aspire a democratic process between the researcher and those being researched as these share a great knowledge on the topic of education in comparison to the Western anthropologist who is a stranger in the research setting (Stenhouse in Vulliamy, 1990)[4]. The case of this study constitutes the implementation of ALP in Liberia by NRC. The case is an exemplifying case in the sense that: *"the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation"* (Yin in Bryman, 2008 p. 65). This is based on the argument that ALP as a post-conflict programme in Liberia does not represent an extreme or unusual case. Within the case study the main unit of analysis is the ALP. The programme has been studied from three angles using multiple sources of data. Information about the programme has been collected from the perspectives of the involved actors through interviews and through participant observation. This has been done using propositions from capacity development theory c.f. the previous chapter. Secondly information on the ALP has been collected in relation to national policies through a document analysis, and thirdly it has been analysed as an expression of global world models for educational programming in post-conflict settings. The latter constitutes a comparative dimension. This global/local dimension falls within the tradition of borrowing and lending of education systems and policies and concerns "*what can be learned and imported from elsewhere (borrowing), as well as what can be taught and exported to elsewhere (lending)"* (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004 p. 2). For this study the impact of policy borrowing and lending on local education reform in Liberia is central when the ALP is approached as a world model developed on the basis of the global discourses. The policies in question are lent and borrowed from the global polices of education with EFA being central.

[4] This approach to the relationship between the researcher and those being researched has especially been used with regards to evaluation processes in the educational field (Vulliamy, 1990).

Fundamental for this comparative dimension is the examination of why the global policies are borrowed and lent: how this is done and who the agents of the transfer are (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). The world culture theory provides the theoretical framework for making this examination by shading light on the dynamics between the global world models and the nation state, and the role which the international organisations play in this (Meyer, et al., 1997).

3.2 Access to the field

In order to be able to get access to the field and study the ALP contact was established with the implementing organisation NRC. This was done before the fieldwork was planned and conducted. Having this contact turned out to be invaluable in order to get access to the field. The NRC contact provided practical and logistical solutions as well as access to their network. This eased the process of getting in contact and make appointments with the interviewees. Particularly with regards to making appointments in the Ministry of Education (MOE) the NRC contact was a great help. The official offices were characterised by a weak organisation which meant that it was difficult to make appointments with central stakeholders and in several cases the interviews were rescheduled or cancelled. It quickly turned out that using the official channels to reach central stakeholders, especially in the ministry of education, was not leading to appointments and therefore a gatekeeper[5] from NRC became crucial in order to get access to the field. Upon arrival in Liberia the Minister of Education was visited and the purpose of the fieldwork and the study was presented and accepted. This consent made the research officially sanctioned and served as an assurance for the interviewees that the study would not concern sensitive issues which had not been approved (Lewin, 1990). Having this assurance the interviewees seemed willing to open up and talk freely. This might be due to exactly the role as a foreigner which meant that the interviewer did not have any authority or influence on the situation of interviewees (Lewin, 1990). The practical aspect of mobility became a central issue in the fieldwork. In terms of logistics the road conditions were very poor. This has influenced what stakeholders it has been possible to interview in the three counties as those in the most remote areas were not accessible. Furthermore it was not possible to get around alone and hence all transport did depend on the NRC staff. To a large extent it was possible to coordinate the interview schedule with the schedule of the NRC but a few times appointments had to be rescheduled. This situation,

[5] The gatekeeper was Programme Coordinator for the NRC ALP.

which was rather unpredictable, led to a pragmatic approach to the data collection in order to seize the opportunities which occurred. According to Michael Patton being pragmatic is a valid approach to the qualitative research process (Patton, 2002).

3.3 Sampling

It was decided to interview actors within the education sector who have been involved in the ALP. The involved actors represent education officers in the Ministry of Education (MOE), at the county level (CEOs), and at the district levels (DEOs). Besides this, members of the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and head teachers from the ALP schools have been included, and finally the NRC supervisors who have been supervising the ALP teachers constitute a group of involved actors. These actors have been chosen as they are representing the MOE from the very local to the government level. In order to collect data at the different levels of the education sector several types of sampling have been used.

In the Ministry of Education the criteria from the onset was to interview a representative from the ALP Unit, one from the Bureau of Primary Education, one from the Bureau of Teacher Education as well as one from Bureau of Research, Planning and Development, and one from the Bureau of Administration. The argument for this was that perspectives of ALP from all the departments which have an influence on the programme would be represented. It nevertheless turned out to be impossible due to the above described organisational situation and convenience sampling hence turned out to be the only option. Resulting from this, three persons from the MOE were interviewed: two of the officials from the ALP Unit - who both have been working with the ALP since it was introduced - and the Assistant Minister from the Department of Teacher Training. The selection of these three interviewees was based on who were available. The limited access to interviewees from the MOE might constitute a bias as it is mainly the ALP Unit which is represented. This situation is to some degree met through the document analysis as the central education strategies which are analysed are developed by the MOE.

At the county level purposive sampling was used. This approach was chosen as the intention was to interview persons relevant for the research questions. (Bryman, 2008). Resulting from this the County Education Officer (CEO) from each of the three counties where NRC has implemented ALP was chosen to be interviewed. Unfortunately a political decision was made to suspend 9 out of the 15 CEOs which meant that the CEO from one of

the counties was suspended and hence only two of the three CEOs were interviewed. Both of the CEOs had been in the position for several years. For the interviews this meant that they were able to give answers and insights into the historic of the ALP.

At the district level it was not possible time wise to interview all of the DEOs within the three counties. Therefore it was decided to interview two DEOs from each county by using random sampling whereby the interviewees where picked by chance (Bryman, 2008). This was done by picking number two and four from an alphabetic list. One of the DEOs cancelled and within the time frame it was not possible to reschedule the interview so eventually five DEOs were interviewed. Out of the five DEOs two were female and all of them had been in their positions for a year or more. This gender balance seems to be representative for government officials in general.

Regarding the PTAs random sampling was used to select one PTA in each county. This was again done based on picking a random number from an alphabetic list. As the PTAs consist of a group of members it was decided to let as many of the members as possible participate in the interviews and hence the interviews were focus group interviews rather than one-on-one interviews. In all of the three interviews five members participated. Characteristic for the focus group interview was that several topics in relation to the ALP and the role of the PTA were discussed by the group with the interviewer moderating this discussion (Bryman, 2008).

The head teachers were selected based on the PTAs so that the PTAs and the Head teachers were from the same schools. This was done in order to be able to cross-check the information which they shared and thereby increase the triangulation. The interview with one of the head teachers got cancelled and eventually two out of the three head teachers were interviewed.

The sampling of the NRC supervisors was purposive and all of the 12 supervisors were interviewed. This was done in focus groups in order not to exclude any of the supervisors. The focus groups were based on the teams in which they usually worked. This meant that the interviewees were divided into the three counties in which the supervisors had been working. In total they were twelve and time wise it was not realistic to interview them one by one. Due to logistical reasons the supervisors from one of the counties were interviewed in two groups

as all of them were not able to meet at the same time. This means four interviews were conducted with the supervisors. Out of the twelve NRC supervisors eleven were male.

In total 19 interviews have been included in the study (see figure 3.1). Apart from the here mentioned groups of actors interviews were conducted with an European Union (EU) officer and an education advisor from one of the other organisations implementing ALP. Furthermore an interview was made with staff from a local NGO. During the process of the research the field narrowed down and hence these interviews fell outside the focus of the study and have hence not been included. The original intention was to add the perspective of other implementing organisations in the education sector but throughout the data collection process it became clear that including this dimension would make the scope of the research too board. Narrowing down the research during the process is a normal procedure when conducting qualitative research (Bryman, 2008; Lewin, 1990).

Table 3.1 Overview of interviews

Interview group	Number of interviews	Number of interviewees
MOE	3	3
CEO	2	2
DEO	5	5
PTA	3	15
Head teachers	2	2
NRC supervisors	4	12
Total	**19**	**39**

3.4 Data collection methods

In the case study several sources of data can be used and by doing this it is possible to get a deeper understanding of the phenomena which is subject to the research (Yin, 2009). In this study data was collected through a document analysis, interviews and participant observation. According to Martyn Hammersley (2008) this triangulation serves the purpose of providing complimentary information as different perspectives of the unit of analysis is included. This provides a more nuanced picture of the phenomenon. Furthermore he argues

that it is increasing the validity of the findings as it becomes possible to cross-check the collected information (Hammersley, 2008). In the following the sources of data as well as the methods used to collect them will be elaborated on. Due to the qualitative nature of the study the data collection has been an ongoing process between collection and analysis of the data (Bryman, 2008; Vulliamy, 1990). As the focus of the study changed during the process the interview guide for instance has been adjusted along the way and that documents analysed have been included as they were discovered based on either comments from the interviewees or references from other sources.

3.4.1. Document analysis

The document analysis has been based on a range of different documents. One type of documents is central documents from the government of Liberia which includes the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the previous education plan: the Liberian Primary Education Recovery Program (LPERP) which was the first initiative to reform the education sector after the war. The current Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2010-2020 has also been included. These three documents concern the overall education sector and has been analysed in order to get an insight into the national strategies for the education sector. Other documents developed by the government but concentrating on the ALP were also analysed. These include the national Guidelines for the ALP and a document from 2009 suggesting alternative phase-out strategies for the ALP namely: *Accelerated Learning Program (ALP): Which Way Forward?* (MoE, 2009a) These documents provided general information about the national ALP and the national strategies for the program. In order to get a different perspective than the government polices two evaluations of the ALP have been included as well. One was an evaluation of the national ALP from 2007 made by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the other one was an evaluation of the NRC ALP made by independent consultants developed upon the termination of the programme in 2010. Finally the policy paper of NRC has also been included to get the perspective of the implementing organisation. This paper outlines the values and mandate for the NRC.

Few official documents from the Liberian government are available online and the intention was to collect central documents when interviews were conducted with officials from the Ministry of Education. It turned out that this is not easy done as the officials also did not have access to the documents. This issue has been noted in one of the ALP evaluations where it is stated that many original documents have been lost: "*During the assessment it has*

been difficult to establish the details of the ALP policy as many records from the start of the project have been lost" (Nicholson, 2007 p. 19). Due to this situation statistical data has furthermore been difficult to get access to and hence the statistics used in the study is based on statistics used in the Education Sector Plan (ESP). These are based on a National School Census from 2007/08. This suggest a possible bias as not having access to the actual statics means that it becomes necessary to rely on the presentation of the statistics as they are used in the ESP.

3.4.2 Interviews

Two types of interviews were made: semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The latter was made in order not to exclude any members of the groups in relation to the PTAs and the NRC supervisors. The benefit of making focus group interviews is that the interviewees might challenge each other a bit and hence a more realistic reflection of what people actually think might become evident (Bryman, 2008). The challenge with focus group interviews is nevertheless that one or a few of the interviewees might dominate the discussion. This situation might distort the answers as others in the group might not express opinions which are deviating (Bryman, 2008). This situation was the case in several of the interviews conducted both PTA members and NRC staff. In both cases this was addressed by making the interviewees take turns to feed into the discussion. The semi-structured interview provides the possibility of adjusting the interview questions in each interview session allowing the interviewee to follow his/her own track but still sticking to the topic (Bryman, 2008). This approach to the interview has been useful in this study because it allowed context specific topics to be revealed by the interviewees and these could hence be followed up upon. The interviews were based on an interview guide structured around five questions which concerned central components of NRC ALP. The central components of the NRC ALP are: the ALP curriculum, Teacher training, Community mobilisation, PTAs, Young mothers' education and Support to administration and management at the county and district levels. The interview guide was used in order to focus the interviews around the content of the NRC ALP. During the research process these have been narrowed down to three components as it turned out that community mobilisation and PTAs were a part of the same component. Furthermore the component on young mothers has during the analysis been included in the community mobilisation component as it became evident that they were overlapping each other. This situation is another reflection of the qualitative research process which at first

requires a broad approach but necessarily narrows down during the process (Bryman, 2008; Lewin, 1990). In relation to the overall research questions the logic of the five interview questions has been that by gaining insight into the perception of the involved stakeholders on the five areas, which the questions cover, it would be possible to discover at what levels the main features of NRC ALP has been integrated into the education sector. The interview questions were[6]:

1. *Do you think that the establishment of ALP schools in your district has had any impact on the conventional primary schools in terms of teaching methods?*

2. *Has the training of ALP teachers had an impact on the education sector in your district?*

3. *Has the establishment of the ALP in any ways had an impact on the organisational structures and administrative practices in the education sector at district level?*

4. *In what ways have the establishment of ALP PTAs influenced the education sector at district level?*

5. *How do you feel the establishment of the ALP has influenced the approach to education in the community?*

In the interviews no single format (Lewin, 1990) was used as the wording of the questions has not been the same in the different interviews as each of the stakeholder groups have had different reference points. An example on these reference points is that in the interviews with the CEOs the reference has been the county and in the case of DEOs it has been the districts whereas in interviews with the ministry it has been the country in general. By using these five questions as departure point for the interviews it was possible to keep the interviews focused. After the first interview it nevertheless became clear that the questions were too open and the interview went in too many different directions. Based on this the questions were translated into more specific questions as recommended by Steiner Kvale (1997). This translation resulted in a quite long interview guide with rather specific questions which lead the interviewee to stick to the original themes (See annex A for the full interview

[6] The example used here is from the interview guide to the interviews with the DEOs

guide). In line with Keith Lewin (1990) more open ended follow up questions were asked in order to make space for exploring issues brought up by the interviewees.

It was possible to conduct the interviews in English as this is the official language in Liberia and all the involved interviewees were able to and comfortable with expressing themselves in English. Nevertheless it is not the mother tongue of either the interviewees or the interviewer, and this is a potential source of bias as it might limit the communication in terms of subjectivity and interpretation (Patton, 2002). In order to meet this potential bias a sum up was made concluding all interviews and the interviewees were asked if they had anything they wanted to add. This was done in an attempt to involve the interviewee and provide the opportunity for them to make correction if they found that something has been misunderstood or misinterpreted during the interview. All interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed. This procedure made the interview situation more free and flexible for the interviewer as it was only necessary to make strategic notes during the interview (Patton, 2002). Furthermore it was possible to listen through the interviews while being in the field and discover topics to be elaborated or further explained. In order to keep track of all the interviewed people and recall the situations permission was asked to take a photo after each interview (Patton, 2002). This permission was granted in all cases.

The settings for the interviews differed between each of the groups. The interviews with the staff in the Ministry were made in the offices of the Education Officers (EOs). Before interviewing any of the EOs at the county and district levels a NRC workshop, where all the EOs were present, was attended by the interviewer. This gave the opportunity to present the research and the aim of the study. By doing this the overt role of the researcher was chosen as the interviewees knew the role of the interviewer (Bryman, 2008). Furthermore participation in the workshop expressed an interest in the work of the EOs and it constituted a common reference point in the later interviews which turned out to be an important factor in the establishment of a good rapport with the interviewed EOs (Bryman, 2008; Lewin, 1990). Before the workshop was attended the selection of the DEOs to be interviewed was made and appointments could be made in person. This seemed to be a benefit as it otherwise in general was very difficult to make appointments with people. As logistics were an obstacle in general a great effort was made to meet with the interviewees at their offices or schools close by so they would not have any transportation issues. Contact was made with the PTAs during community mobilisation workshops. During the time of the fieldwork these workshops were

held in each county and it made it relatively easy to meet with the PTAs. The workshops were attended by the interviewer the whole day in order to establish a good contact and rapport with the interviewees and show interest in the work of the PTAs (Bryman, 2008; Lewin, 1990). During the day the interview was conducted when all the members of the PTA felt comfortable. Due to challenges with making appointments the head teachers were visited unannounced at the schools. By doing it this way it was possible to ask if they had time to and interest in making an interview. In both cases they agreed. It can be argued that it was a bit intrusive to do it this way, but the choice was based on recommendations from the NRC supervisors. One of the NRC supervisors went along to these interviews and it had a positive effect that the head teachers knew the NRC supervisors very well and clearly felt comfortable with them. The interviews with the NRC supervisors were made at the NRC field office by the end of the fieldwork. These interviews provided the perspective of an outside actor and statements from the actors in the education sector could be tested against the NRC supervisors. Besides planning to make the interviews with the NRC supervisors in the end of the fieldwork the general order in which the interviews were conducted depending on logistics and coordination with the NRC staff.

3.4.3 Participant observation

Participant observation was made whenever possible with the aim of understanding meanings and "*to understand the culture of those being studied"* (Denzin in Vulliamy, 1990 p. 11). As the NRC field office in Tubmanburg (see chapter 4 for a map of Liberia) was the base during the fieldwork a lot of time was spend there. Staying this long at the office compound and in the surrounding community meant that the news of having a visitor in the village faded out which gave a good insight into the everyday of people's lives. In order to avoid any confusion the County Director decided that the researcher should work under the title of being an intern. This title was accepted by the researcher in spite of the bias which is related to be seen as a part of the NRC staff. Being based at the field office provided the opportunity to interact with the NRC staff – supervisors as well as other staffs. This gave an insight of the context which was valuable for the understanding of the opinions expressed by all interviewees. It also provided the opportunity for plenty informal interviews which is central for the process of qualitative research (Lewin, 1990; Vulliamy, 1990). This deepened the understanding of many of the structural issues which were touched upon by the interviewees but difficult for them to explain to an outsider. Having a base at the field office

also meant that NRC staff presented opportunities to attend activities which had not been foreseen in the planning of the field work. This included education meetings at the county level with other implementing partners and visits to the Ministry of Education. Attending official education meetings in the counties provided an insight into the cooperation among stakeholders in the education sector as well as it gave an insight into some parts of the management of the education sector. The latter also accounts for the visits to the MOE as this provided an opportunity to learn more about the administration and management at the central level. Furthermore several trips were made to the ALP schools when some of the cars went into the field. This gave a better understanding of the local context and again made a foundation for a common reference point with the interviewees. Being based at the field office also constitutes a potential bias as getting a deeper insight into the provider of the ALP compared to the receivers and others involved might affect the researcher in a way which somehow favours the provider. This bias was sought to be met by taking every opportunity to meet and engage with other actors involved in the ALP.

The observations were documented by keeping field notes which were continuously accumulated as the observations progressed and more nuances revealed. The notes were also used to revise the interview questions in terms of topics for follow up questions. The participatory observations provided important information for the research as it was an opportunity to let the field speak so to say rather than asking questions based on an interview guide.

3.5 Ethical considerations

In relation to ethical principles of conducting social research Diener and Crandall (1978) have summarised four main issues of which to be aware: Harm to participants, Lack of informed consent, Invasion of privacy and Deception (Diener & Crandall, 1978). These have sought to be taken into consideration in the study. Before each interview the interviewee was informed about: the purpose of the research; who would have access to the data; the relation to NRC; the status of the interviewer as a master student from Oslo University and that they would not be mentioned by name in the final report. In continuation of this is the question of confidentiality which has been sought fulfilled by grouping the interviewees across the counties so no one would be identified. One problem in this regards has nevertheless been the Assistant Minister of Teacher Training as she was the only representative from the MOE outside of the ALP Unit. A division of the two offices had to be maintained because they

represent rather different relations to the ALP. Lewin (1990) argues that for prominent individuals interviewed there might be "*little point in trying to give them pseudonyms since their identity would be obvious to any informed reader"* (Lewin, 1990 p. 140). This might also be the situation in this case. It can be argued that since she has been interviewed in her official role and as the topic was not sensitive this situation does not constitute a significant problem for the validity of her answers.

Before each interview permission was asked to record the interview and this was granted in every case. The interviewees were asked to give an oral consent before the interview was started and they were given the possibility to ask questions before the interview. The majority of the interviewees was satisfied with the introduction (c.f. above paragraph) before the interview and did not have any further questions. Two of the interviewees had a few questions regarding the relation to NRC and what would be the status of the final report[7]. The topic of the research is a public matter and the interviewees have been interviewed in their position as employees of the education sector and NRC respectively. The topics touched upon in the interviews have been of a public rather than a private matter. The interviewees were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the research and hence no harm was done to the participants. Due to the overt role chosen no deception occurred and also their privacy was not intruded. Following the overt role of the researcher the accuracy of the data has been sought increased as the interviewees knew the actual purpose and topic they were responding to (Bryman, 2008). Concluding general consideration was shown as making interviews is a matter of mutual trust and as Lewin (1990) argues: "*it would be a short-sighted researcher that did not exercise discretion sensitively"* (Lewin, 1990 p. 141).

3.6 Categorising and analysing data

Analysing qualitative data differs from the analysis of quantitative data as it is an ongoing process during the data collection process (Bryman, 2008). As the qualitative research process is inductive the categories used in the analysis emerged from the data. Firstly the interviews were transcribed and then the process of coding the data began. Coding is a way of organising the qualitative data from which it otherwise might be difficult to extract patterns (Bryman, 2008). The coding in this study was done in three steps where each interview were first organised into the five overall interview questions. Secondly the answers

[7] The answer to the latter was a Master Thesis which would be submitted to the University of Oslo and to those of the interviewees and involved stakeholders who wish to receive a copy.

related to each of the questions were collected level-wise so that the answers by all the CEOs were put together as well as the answers of the MOE, DEO etc. The third step included coding the answers from each of the levels intro codes which emerges from the answers. By categorising the data this way a nuanced insight into the perception of the ALP by the involved stakeholders was revealed. Especially two types of information were revealed namely issues which the stakeholders found central, and whether these issues were shared across the levels of involved actors in the education sector. One example of this was the building of ALP schools which the NRC had been doing. It was raised as an issue by several of the interviewed groups but the perception of the usefulness of the schools differed tremendously between the groups.

The documents were analysed in relation to the three components of the NRC ALP. This categorisation provided important information on the following three issues: the national strategies and how the components fed into these; the evaluations of the ALP at a national and regional level with an emphasis on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme[8] and it provided information about the frame of the implementing organisation.

The analysis has been divided into three parts based on the three components of the ALP: the community mobilisation, teacher training as well as support to administration and management. Within these three parallel analyses the NRC ALP component in question has been analysed on the basis of the criteria for the donor intervention in relation to capacity development (table 2.1). Following this it has been analysed whether the implementation of the NRC ALP component has lead to any capacity development relevant for the three reform processes respectively based on the characteristics of capacity development in fragile situations (table 2.2). The outcome of the two analyses has been discussed in the perspective of sustainability. This procedure has to a wide extent been followed with regards to the analysis of all three reform processes. There are variations though. The world culture theory has been used throughout the study to explain and point out global-local dynamics. This also means that the use of the world culture theory in the three analyses varies a great deal. The findings from the analysis of the three reform processes were finally compared and concluded upon in relation to the research questions.

[8] It should be kept in mind that evaluations are not objective and might not always be critical towards the programme.

3.7 Validity of the findings

Validating qualitative research has been an ongoing discussion as there has been great resistance against the use of traditional quantitative indicators for research validation. Thor Arnfinn Kleven (2007) nevertheless argues that validity is a property of inferences and hence the source of data is subordinate. It is therefore the meaning and interpretation of the data which should be sought validated rather than the data as such. Based on this the validity sought in this study concerns the perspectives of internal and ecological validity.

The internal validity concerns the inferences drawn about what influenced human actions (Kleven, 2007). In order to increase the internal validity it has been sought to rule out alternative causal interpretations in relation to the perceptions of the involved stakeholders in the education sector. One way of doing this has been to seek respondent validation from the interviewees by summing up on the interviews together with the interviewee. By doing this it became possible to adjust and confirm the same understanding of the raised topics. In qualitative research this is a central feature for the internal validity of the findings as it is assumed that there is no objective truth to be revealed but rather several different accounts of the social reality exists and hence a clarification of these becomes imperative (Guba and Lincoln in Bryman, 2008). Triangulation is another way of increasing the internal validity by cross-checking the findings either by using different sources of data, methods or theory (Bryman, 2008). In this study the findings have been triangulated as different aspects of the unit of analysis (ALP) have been illuminated through the use of data collection methods. By doing this, areas of inconsistency between the intended outcome of the education policies and the perceived reality by the involved actors have become evident. This contributes to the internal validity by narrowing down the likelihood of alternative causal interpretations in relation to the Phenomenology of change which Fullan argues is at the core when examining "*how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended* – [Which] *is at the heart of the spectacular lack of success of most social reforms"* (Fullan in Vulliamy, 1990 p. 20).

Ecological validity concerns the matter of the research being close to the real-life situation which is the very opposition to the experimental research design. Vulliamy (1990) argues that ecological validity provides a deeper understanding of one case rather than a generalisation to a wider population but nevertheless the aim is that the qualitative approach might *illuminate "the processes of schooling elsewhere, but not with the intention that any*

specific findings should be generalizable" (Vulliamy, 1990 p. 13). In this study the ecological validity has been sought through the field work and the contextual understanding gained by participant observation. In relation to the transferability of the results it has not been central for the study to produce findings which can be generalised to other contexts. Therefore it should be kept in mind that the case is context specific in terms of time, place, culture, history etc and therefore generalisation of the findings should be done carefully. Nevertheless, the process of education reform in a post-conflict setting and the global/local dynamics which influences these which have been analysed in this study might illuminate elements of the same process elsewhere. Patton (2002) and Kleven (2007) argue that to draw inferences about other persons or situations than those studied and hence increase the transferability of the findings require a thick description of the research process. Thick description has been sought in this study by accounting for the social setting of the research in relation to education and the post-conflict context in order to create a basis for "*the creation of general statements about culture and its significance in people's social life"* (Bryman, 2008 p. 700).

3.8 Limitations of the study

Limitations of the trustworthiness of qualitative research concerns the perspective of the researcher and whether this has influenced the research and the findings (Bryman, 2008). As mentioned earlier it is inherent in a qualitative research approach to assume that there is no objective truth and hence the social world will always be perceived through a certain perspective. This is also the case for this study and several biases and hence limitations can be identified. Besides the biases already touched upon in the chapter the issue of reactivity constitutes a central bias as those being researched will always react to this and hence the researcher will never be able to avoid this aspect (Bryman, 2008). This bias has been taken into consideration in the data collection process by spending as much time as possible with the involved stakeholders in order to make the news of a stranger fade out. Another major bias is the question of cultural issues as the cultural background of the researcher in this case differs tremendously from the one of the interviewees'. It is inevitable to avoid this bias when researchers from the North are conducting research on topics in the South. In line with this bias is the problematique and potential bias being a foreigner which posed certain challenges in terms of avoiding misunderstandings. This was sought addressed by inviting the interviewees to comment and correct on the sum up provided by the interviewer concluding every interview. None of the interviewees made any corrections. This situation is related to

the bias of using a gatekeeper from NRC and in general being linked to NRC. As well as it has given access to the field it might also have caused an element of bias as the interviewees might have adjusted their responses according to what they might have thought would be in the interest of NRC. One example of this was that in almost all cases the interviewees made pledges to the NRC of staying longer. It seems to be a situation which could not have been avoided. Access to the field would not have been possible without this link to the NRC and hence the triangulation becomes central as a means to reduce the bias. Another potential bias has been the overt role of the researcher and the presentation of the aim and purpose of the study before the interviews were conducted. The risk is that the interviewees might adjust their answers to what they think the researcher wants to hear. Again triangulation of sources of data has been used as a strategy to minimise the potential bias.

Besides these described biases the processing of the data into categories and the current selection of emerging topics from the data is based on the interpretation of the researcher and hence a different researcher might have seen and focused on a different pattern in the data. This accounts especially for the issue of subjectivity when interpreting other people's answer. In order to meet this bias descriptions of the processes throughout the research has been included as well as transparency in relation to the continuous reasoning has been sought.

4 Liberia & the education sector

In post-conflict recovery education can play a mitigating role which stabilises the fragile peace. Education encompasses a strong symbolic value and is usually prioritised highly by all groups in society, and furthermore it provides the opportunity to sensitise the next generation to peace and conflict dynamics. Nevertheless the post-conflict context determines the possible interventions in the education sector and hence the challenges in meeting the educational needs of the country. The complex history of Liberia shows the challenges in rebuilding the public sector and ensuring a sustainable development of the education system which is pivotal for the further stability and peace. This chapter presents the conflict history of Liberia and the role of international organisations and agencies in restoring the peace. It sketches out the security situation today and outlines the historical role of education in Liberia. The purpose of the chapter is furthermore to describe the structure, organisation and management of the education sector along with the policies developed by the government of Liberia regarding the education sector. In addition the education plans are presented in order to provide an insight to how the government wants to carry out the policies.

4.1 The rise of a conflict-torn state

Liberia was declared an independent state already in 1847 but ever since its beginning Liberia has been tormented by conflict. In the early 19th century the American Colonization Society (ACS) returned freed African Americans slaves to present day Liberia as a part of the Back-to-Africa movement in the United States. This repatriation of the freed slaves caused great problems in Liberia as conflict between the indigenous Liberians and the Americo-

Liberians[9] occurred from the unset. The Americo-Liberians saw themselves as more civilised and superior to the indigenous population whereas the indigenous Liberian saw the Americo-Liberians as liberated slaves who should have a lower status in the society (Dunn-Marcos, Kollehlon, Ngovo, & Russ, 2005). Nevertheless the Americo-Liberians, with great support from USA, were in power and controlled the country in spite of the fact that they only constituted 3 per cent of the total population (Dunn-Marcos, et al., 2005). Until the 1980s the Americo-Liberians maintained a stratified society where the indigenous Liberians were excluded from all major economic, social, cultural and political institutions. In 1980 Samuel K. Doe lead a coup d'état in 1980 as a reaction to the miserable conditions under which the indigenous Liberians were forced to live. Until Doe came into power all presidents of Liberia had been decedents of the freed slaves. The coup by Doe was strongly supported by the Liberians but the enthusiasm quickly fainted due to Doe's patrimonial rule which favoured his own tribe (Olonisakin, 2007). In 1989 Doe was overthrown by Charles Taylor and a brutal civil war, which lasted for 14 years and caused destabilisation to the whole region, broke out. Apart from the overarching conflict between the indigenous Liberians and the Americo-Liberians there have during the years been tensions among several of the 18[10] indigenous groups living in Liberia. The different ethnic groups are clustered in 15 countries in which the country is divided. These counties differ tremendously in terms of demographical and geographical factors as the country covers both coastline and highland and in some areas rubber and iron ore are more prevailing than in other areas. The root causes of the civil war are various but the ethnical and internal divisions and the unequal distribution of wealth along with the control over natural resources are main reasons for the conflict (Dunn-Marcos, et al., 2005).

4.2 The civil war & the role of the International Community

The Liberian civil war can be divided into two periods. The first period of the war spanned from 1989 to 1997 and the second war from 1998 to 2003. The two periods differs distinctively and are described as follows:

> *"The period of the first war began with a rebellion that rapidly escalated and resulted in the complete collapse of the Liberian state; it involved at least eight armed fractions attracted regional and UN peacekeeping from 1990 to 1997. The second war was waged with an elected regime led by Charles Taylor, and without*

[9] The freed slaves and their decedents are categorised as Americo-Liberians

[10] The number of ethnical groups varies in the literature on Liberia.

an international peacekeeping presence, until the resignation of President Taylor in August 2003" (Olonisakin, 2007 p. 259).

During the first period of war it was extremely difficult for the humanitarian actors to navigate their actions as the war was characterised by extreme brutality and all rules of war were ignored. There were up to eight fighting fractions which constantly were changing and made it almost impossible for the humanitarian actors to operate and protect the civilians who were the main target of the fighting parties (Olonisakin, 2007). Brutal mutilations of the civilians and the widespread use of child soldiers were some of the crimes committed. It is estimated that between 60-70 per cent of the population suffered from sexual violence and rape and up to 270.000 people were killed during the conflict (GoL, 2008b). Due to the indiscriminate killings Liberians and foreigners fled the country, and out of a population of merely 4 millions, 850.000 fled to neighbouring countries and more than 500.000 where internally displaced within the country (Jaye, 2011). Due to the brutality of the war the regional peace force ECOMOG[11] was at times the only international actor able to stay in Liberia. They had the responsibility of acting as a peacekeeping force as well as to protect and provide humanitarian relief for the civilians (Olonisakin, 2007). In spite of ECOMOG not being prepared to provide the humanitarian response "*ECOMOG prevented a major humanitarian catastrophe from taking place, because of its role in securing emergency aid and evacuating civilians"* (IBIS, 2004 p. 15).

The second period of the civil war was initiated due to an increasing dissatisfaction with Charles Taylor's brutal regime and gained momentum with support from an international pressure and a warranty from the International Criminal Court. In the second period there were mainly two fighting parties, Taylor and the rebellion against his regime. It was to some extent easier for the humanitarian actors to operate in this situation. Refugee camps were already established in Ivory Coast, Guinea, Ghana and Sierra Leone and in the later part of the war 35 IDP[12] camps were established within the country (GoL, 2008b). Few international NGOs managed to operate throughout the war, but Médicins Sans Frontière (MSF) and Save the Children have played major roles (Olonisakin, 2007). Later on various other NGOs and international Refugee Councils have been present in the humanitarian response. UN has been criticised for not interfering sufficiently in the conflict in terms of military support and

[11] The Cease-fire Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
[12] Internally Displaced Person

protection of civilians as they mainly operated around Monrovia and where ECOMOG could provide security (Olonisakin, 2007). In 2003 Charles Taylor resigned and in August 2003 the long lasting civil war ended with the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, Ghana (Jaye, 2011). The CPA included among others disarmament of ex-combatants which involved thousands of children, the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the initiation of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) which among others includes a peace keeping force of 15.000 soldiers (Jaye, 2011). In 2005 Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson was elected President of Liberia and at the same time she became the first female president in Africa.

4.3 Liberia today

The security situation is still problematic in Liberia. At the regional level the escalating conflict in neighbouring Ivory Coast causes an increased number of Ivorian refugees in the Eastern and Southern parts of Liberia which might be a risk to the fragile peace in the country. At the national level the economic situation is still severe and might cause further insecurity. In spite of the great prevalence of natural resources, which among others includes diamonds and gold, the country is very poor and ranges 162 in the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2011). Approximately 80 % of the population is living on less than US$1 a day (GoL, 2009). 50% of the total population is under the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2011) and yet the unemployment rate of the labour force has been reported as high as 85% (CIA, 2011). This number indicates the difficulties of finding paid jobs. Foreign companies are reluctant to establish in Liberia and the many natural resources are not manufactured in the country which otherwise could have provided jobs. This situation is affecting the security situation as the many unemployed young people might easily be mobilised in rebel groups if they have no positive prospects in life (INEE, 2011b) In the attempt to improve the family income many people move from the hinterland to the capital Monrovia. This tendency, along with the very weak infrastructure, is reinforcing the problematic issue of the clustering of power as well as development around the capital, which has been one of the core elements in the long lasting conflict.

While many donors have implemented education programmes in the attempt to close the huge service delivery gap in order to avoid losing an entire generation on the floor, the interventions have had an interesting side effect. The demand for education has not always been as high as it currently is in Liberia. When the country was established by the freed slaves

they came from a background where slaves in the US were forbidden any education. Most of the settles where hence illiterate and the ACS did not establish any public education institutions. Apart from this education has throughout the history been a privilege of the few, who either belonged to the Americo-Liberian minority or who in one way or another, was adopted into their ranks. Due to this situation public education did not expand significantly and education has thus not been prioritised in the communities (Dunn-Marcos, et al., 2005). Besides this poverty has also been a major obstacle to the expansion of a public education sector. Especially in the rural areas schools were in a very poor condition and parents have been too busy trying to make a living rather than supporting their children's education (Dunn-Marcos, et al., 2005). The poverty is still prevailing and many parents do not have the possibility or the will to send their children to school. Community mobilisation has been used to sensitise the parents to recognise the benefit of as well as the right to education and along with the presence of international organisations education has become accessible to more and more people. Schools have been built where there were never schools before and PTAs are being established in order to increase the local ownership and maintenance of the schools. Ellen Sir-leaf Johnson's presidency is being used widely as an example of the importance of girls' education and with the declaration of free and compulsory education more students have got the possibility to attend.

4.4 The education system

In this section the education system of Liberia will be presented. This includes the structure of the system as well as information about enrolment, different education providers, and inequalities in access to education.

4.4.1 Structure

The education system in Liberia is divided into pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education levels (See figure 4.1). The pre-primary education begins when the child is 2 years old and last for four years. The term pre-primary is the official term used in Liberia for this level and is in the Education Sector Plan (ESP) defined as a component of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) strategy (GoL, 2009). Following the pre-primary level is the primary education which last for six years (age 6-11). Basic education has been declared free and compulsory in Liberia since 2005 but in 2006/7 three quarters of all primary school cost were still paid by the households (GoL, 2009). The cost primarily covers uniforms, notebooks and school books. The high percentage of household spending means that many children in

the official school age are still prevented from receiving education – especially if there are several children in the family (GoL, 2009). Besides the conventional primary school the ALP is a part of the primary education provision in Liberia[13]:

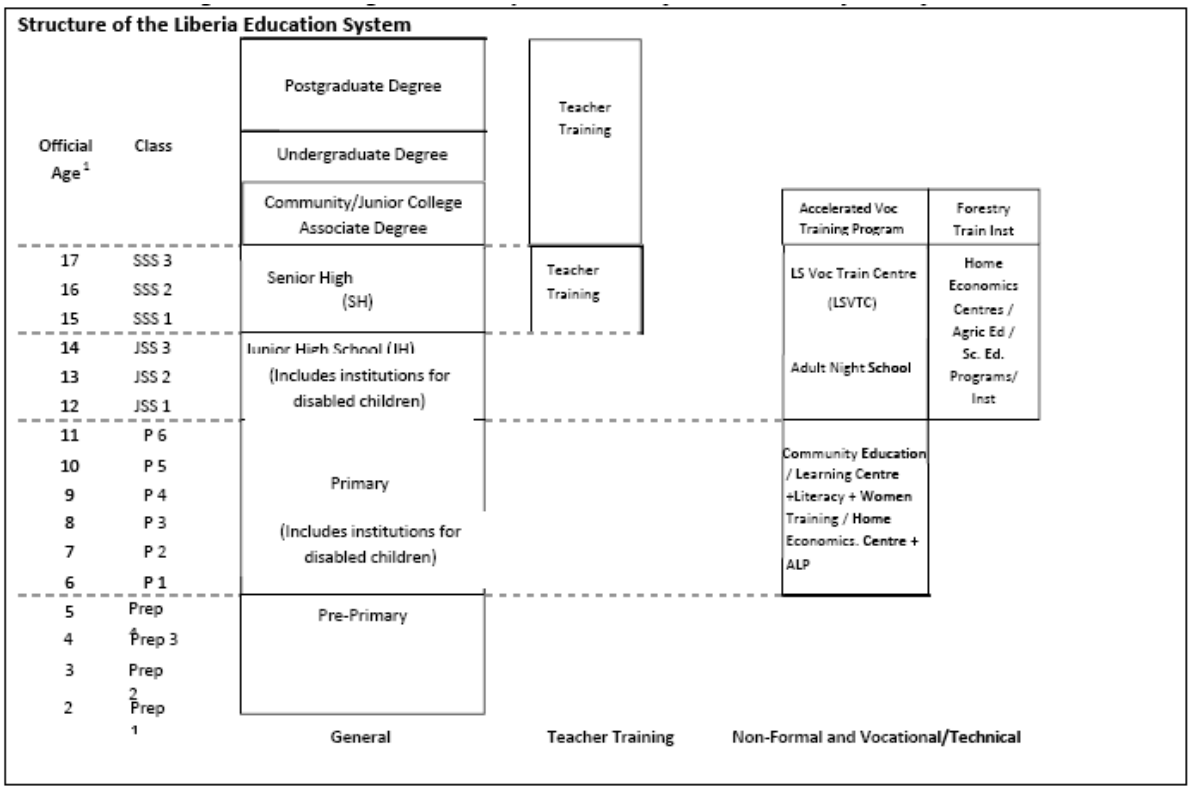
> *"Currently, primary education is provided using two types of program. The first is the typical primary schooling while the other type of schooling is the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). The latter condenses the six years of primary schooling into three years. The condensed program arose out of the need to provide primary schooling to the large numbers of children who either missed out on primary schooling completely or had their education cut short by the civil war and were therefore much above the official primary school age"* (GoL, 2009 p. 56).

The ALP has been a part of the primary education provision since the first education strategy (Liberian Primary Education Recovery Programme) was developed after the war (GoL, 2007). In contrary to the conventional primary education there are no hidden costs in the ALP as there are no uniforms and notebooks, school books etc are provided by the partners who are implementing the ALP.

Upon graduation from the primary level (including ALP) access to secondary education is obtained. The secondary school level is divided into junior high school (JHS) which covers the age of 12-14 and senior high school (SHS) which covers the age of 15-17. In Liberia grade one till nine is defined as basic education and thus the junior high schools are included. In the ESP it is stated that education up till grade nine "*shall be free as soon as possible"* (GoL, 2009 p. 88). The household costs of the total costs of secondary level were nevertheless as high as 75,1 % in 2006/07 (GoL, 2009).

[13] The term 'conventional' is used in Liberia and covers formal education. ALP falls under the category of non-formal education.

Figure 4.1 Structure of the Education System in Liberia (GoL, 2009 p. 14)



4.4.2 Enrolment

In 2007/08 a school census was carried out and the majority of the available statistics on education is based on this census. It is estimated that a total enrolment at the primary level in 2007/08 was 539,887 students excluding the 75,820 ALP students (GoL, 2009, p. 56). The gender parity in the primary school enrolment has increased after the war and in 2007 the female/male ratio was 0.88 (GoL, 2009, p. 60). The gender parity is similar in the ALP schools but at the secondary level gender parity drops to 0.79 and 0.69 in the JHS and SHS respectively.

Table 4.1 National Gender Parity Index (GPI) for pre-primary, primary, Jr. high school and Sr. high school in 2007/2008

Level	Boys	Girls	Total	Female/male ratio
Pre-Primary	251.049	240.515	491.564	0.96
Primary	286.584	253.303	539.887	0.88
ALP	40.245	35.575	75.820	0.88
Junior High School	57.477	45.165	102.642	0.79
Senior high school	32.906	22.694	55.600	0.69

(Source: GoL, 2009)

Since the war ended and the interest for education increased along with increased access enrolment rates have raised as well (GoL, 2009). The figures in table 4.2 nevertheless indicate that the number of children in primary school is less than those of the official primary school age population. In the ESP the relatively low net enrolment at the primary level is explained with the high gross enrolment at the pre-primary level (GoL, 2009). It is stated in the ESP that the high gross enrolment rate at the pre-primary level is indicating that a great majority of the children enrolled are above the official age for the respective level (GoL, 2009). This is a rather unusual situation as it is often under-aged children who are filling up the pre-primary classes. In the ESP the main reason for the current situation is explained with the long civil war which prevented many children from going to school (GoL, 2009). The pattern is to some extent similar for the primary level which is supported by the fact that approximately 63 % of students enrolled in primary school in 2007 were above the age of 11 (GoL, 2009). The great difference between primary net and gross suggest over-aged children in the primary school which is an expression for the post-conflict situation where a great number of children have not had the possibility of attending school during the conflict. The age span of the children enrolled in primary school might pose a challenge in terms of the learner-centred teaching which is aimed at through the reform of the teacher training institutions. This is due to the heterogeneous group which the children form.

Table 4.2 Net and gross enrolment for pre-primary, primary, Jr. high school and Sr. high school in 2007/2008

Level	Net enrolment	Gross enrolment
Pre-Primary	n/a	141%
Primary	35%	94%
ALP	n/a	n/a
Junior High school	n/a	42%
Senior High school	n/a	26%

(Source: GoL, 2009)

4.4.3 Education providers

Apart from the public schools there are many private schools especially in and around Monrovia and in the huge rubber plantations. Also schools run by religious groups are common in the communities as well as community schools. The Ministry of Education has defined the different categories of schools in the ESP as follows:

"At the school level there are four main categories of schools – public, community, private, and mission. Public schools are institutions started, operated and fully financed by the Government. Community schools are institutions started and run by a community for a brief period after which the Government takes over; most retain the name 'community' even after being taken over. The general practice is to group 'community' and public schools together for projecting enrolment and financing trends as community schools are invariably absorbed by the Government. Mission schools are institutions started and run by bodies with religious affiliations. They are not dependant on government funding for their survival although some receive subsidies. Private schools are institutions started and run by individuals and/or groups with no declared religious affiliation or intention of perpetuating a particular religious belief or way of life. The do not receive financial support from the Government" (GoL, 2009 p. 30).

Enrolment in all four types of school has increased dramatically since the level before the war (see table 4.3). Especially community and private schools have become more widespread.

Table 4.3 Total Primary Enrolment by Provider in 1984 and 2007/08

Type	**Primary school enrolment**	
	1984	**2007/08**
Public	91.597	308.748
Mission/religious	26.902	62.316
Community + Private	27.977	168.823
All	**146.476**	**539.887**

(Source: GoL, 2009)

In addition to the conventional school system traditional education has been prevailing. These schools are referred to as *bush-schools* and the main aim of the schools is to prepare young boys and girls to the adult life. Previously the children were taken into the bush and stayed there up to several years while obtaining the necessary skills (Dunn-Marcos, et al., 2005). Today the bush schools still exist but their scope has been limited and is now, due to among others community mobilisation, put aside to the vacations in the public school calendar and if young people go it is usually just for a few weeks or months. There have been no statistics available on the prevalence of the bush-schools and it is hence not clear how widespread the traditional education is today.

4.4.4 Inequalities in access to education

There is a great divergence in the enrolment rates in the 15 counties (see table 4.4). Montserrado County, which holds the capital, has a higher degree of net enrolment which

indicates that the children in the official school age in Monrovia are more likely to attend school than in the rural areas.

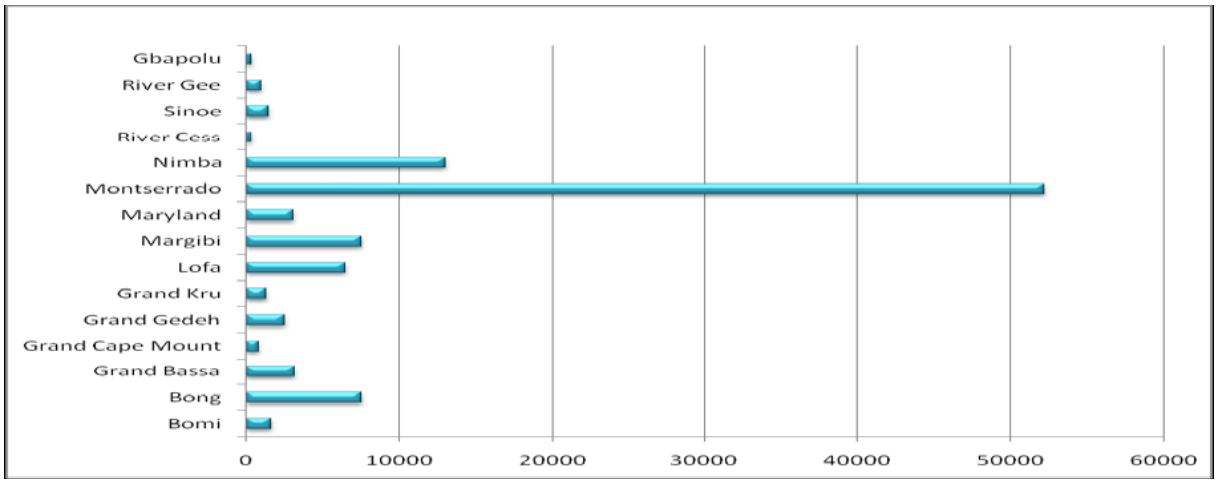
Table 4.4 Primary NER and GER values by county in 2007/8

County	Prim NER	Prim GER
Bomi	18%	55%
Bong	33%	97%
Grand Bassa	30%	89%
Grand Cape Mount	20%	45%
Grand Gedeh	19%	67%
Grand Kru	36%	127%
Lofa	43%	86%
Margibi	37%	99%
Maryland	21%	90%
Montserrado	40%	89%
Nimba	31%	109%
River Cess	19%	98%
Sinoe	18%	70%
River Gee	24%	79%
Gbapolu	31%	86%
National	**33%**	**89%**

(Source: GoL, 2009)

For JHS and SHS the divergence between enrolments in the counties increases significantly. As shown in table 4.5 the enrolment in JHS in Monsterrado is greater that the total enrolment in the rest of the country. This suggests that more students in the appropriate age with a completed primary education live in the urban areas. Another factor is the lack of jr. and sr. high schools in several of the districts which means that secondary education is not available for the students. Due to this students are often moving to the capital when they continue their education.

Table 4.5 Junior High School Enrolment by county in 2007/8



(Source: GoL, 2009)

Besides geographical factors household income and gender are determining for the enrolment figures. In terms of gender parity Montserrado County is the only place where more girls than boys enrol in primary school (see table 4.6). This indicates that more boys than girls complete the nine levels of basic education (GoL, 2009). On average the GPI is nevertheless rather good compared to other countries taking into consideration the cultural and historic context of the country[14].

Table 4.6 Primary GPI values by county in 2007/08

County	Prim GPI
Bomi	0.86
Bong	0.78
Gbarpolu	0.82
Grand Bassa	0.79
Grand Cape Mount	0.94
Grand Gedeh	0.94
Grand Kru	0.71
Lofa	0.81
Margibi	0.96
Maryland	0.80
Montserrado	1.08
Nimba	0.88
River Cess	0.77
River Gee	0.78
Sinoe	0.83
National	0.91

(Source: GoL, 2009)

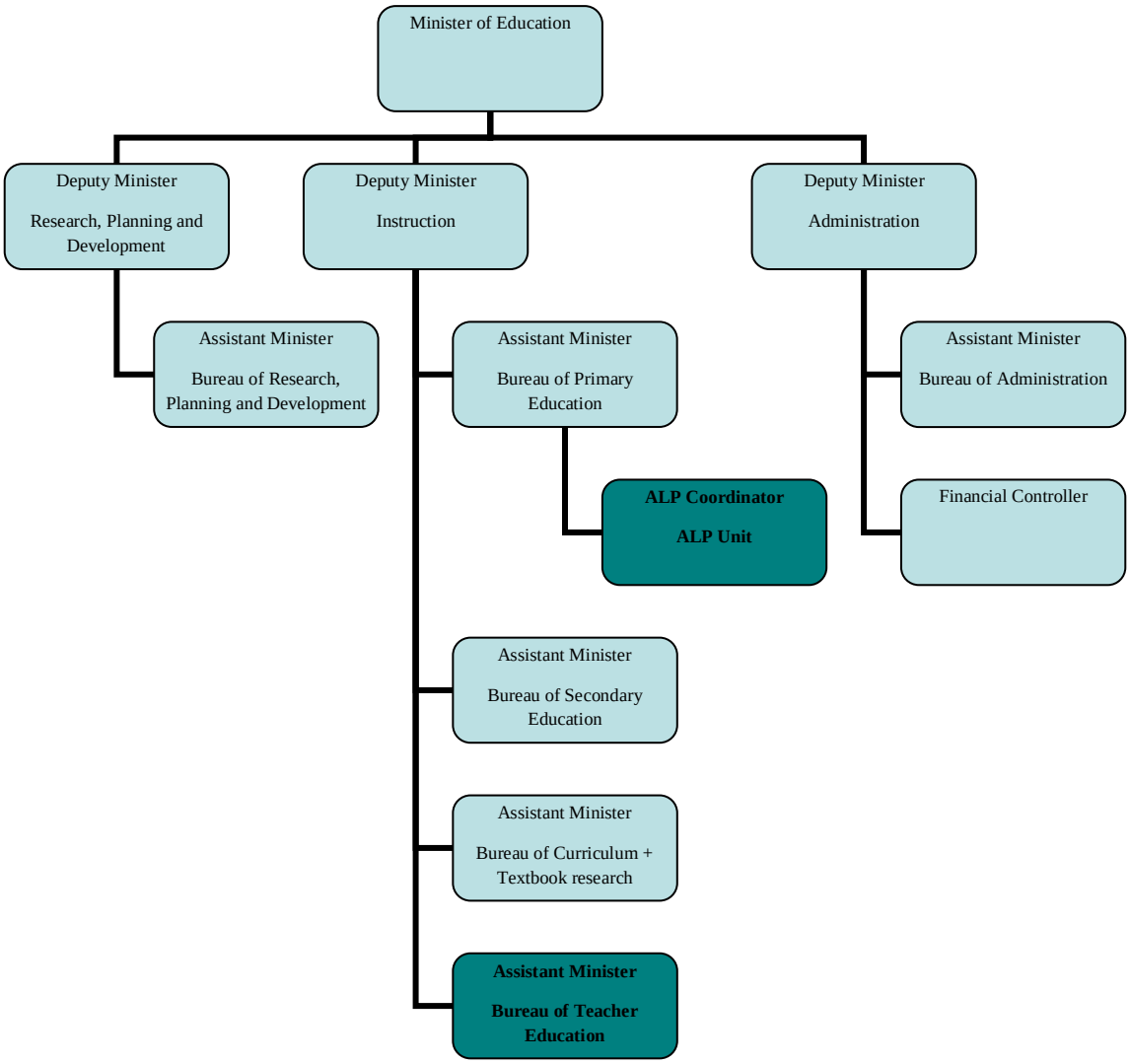
To sum up the figures show that education has become available to more children but some inequalities are still in evidence in terms of gender and geographical placement. Furthermore Liberia is facing great challenges in reaching UPE as the enrolment rates are still relatively low, and in making sure that the age of the children matches the level they are enrolled in. In light of the latter ALP is a suitable option to target the situation but nevertheless less ALP students than expected are enrolling. This is partly due to number of ALP providers but in the ESP it is also stated that many students might not attend ALP in spite of their age because there are already so many over-aged students in the primary school that they feel comfortable there (GoL, 2009). In the next section the organisation and management of the education sector will be presented before the ESP as well as the role of education in the Poverty Reduction Strategy will be elaborated.

[14] In the ESP the statistics on national GPI differ between 0.88 and 0.91 but both numbers indicate a rather high level of gender parity

4.5 Organisation and management of the education sector

The Ministry of Education is divided into three areas: 1) Research, Planning and Development, 2) Instruction and 3) Administration. Primary education is administered by the Bureau of Primary Education and the ALP is administered by the ALP Unit placed under Primary Education. In figure 4.2 an overview of the organisational structures of the Ministry of Education is illustrated[15].

Figure 4.2 Diagrammatic representation of the organisational structure of the MOE



The education sector is managed centrally from the ministry and all major decisions are made here. 15 County Education Officers (CEOs) – one in each county – and 86 District Education Officers (DEOs) are supposed to monitor and supervise the implementation of national

[15] The highlighted boxes indicate in which departments interviews were conducted.

education policies, regulations, programs and development projects in both public and private schools around the country (GoL, 2009, p. 174). In order to promote effective management of the education sector throughout the layers of education governance (MOE, CEOs, and DEOs) there is in the ESP a great emphasis on the establishment of appropriate vertical accountability mechanisms[16]:

> *"Effective management is built upon sound mechanisms for monitoring and supervision. Many of the challenges facing education in Liberia presently can be directly traced to a deficiency in the level and quality of monitoring and supervision of the system"* (GoL, 2009 p. xvi).

In spite of the focus on strengthening the monitoring mechanisms in order to increase the effective management of the education sector it is nonetheless facing severe challenges in terms of available individual as well as organisational capacity:

> *"Weak capacity for management and governance from the central to the local levels remains a key challenge for the MOE. The Education Law outlines that national education priorities must be achieved through, '...a high degree of decentralization by the delegation of a wider scope of authority and responsibilities to the "grassroots" (i.e., counties and districts) with strong county and district education offices (CEOs and DEOs) representing the Ministry of Education (MOE)'"* (GoL, 2009 p. 159).

The current state of the decentralisation process in Liberia is that Civil Service Agency, Governance Commission, and Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs are each implementing coordinated strategies for civil service reforms and decentralisation. According to the 2002 Education Law, the MOE has a strong decentralised management structure with education offices based in county and district levels. In practice, however, decentralisation is not occurring and decisions are primarily taken at the national level and instructions passed on to the counties and districts. In the ESP the reason for this situation is connected directly to the long civil war (GoL, 2009). Furthermore there are no local government structures which have legal responsibilities for the provision of education services in Liberia. Therefore "*decentralization can be described as "de-concentration" of responsibilities within a vertically integrated ministry rather than "devolution" where education officials are*

[16] By vertical accountability is meant the transparency and accountability between the levels of administration in the education sector e.g. between the education officers (EOs) in the ministry and the CEOs, and between the CEOs and the DEOs etc.

accountable to elected local representatives" (GoL, 2009 p. 160). The lack of local governance structures means that the CEOs and DEOs are not mandated to take decisions that are binding for the MOE. This includes employment of teachers and issuing of permissions to operate schools (GoL, 2009). Besides the lack of local government structures the decentralised management is moreover hampered by practical limitations as lack of transportation:

> *"Decentralized management capacity is currently restricted by limited communication and contact between central ministry managers, staff in county and district offices, and schools, due to poor physical and technical infrastructure and limited resources for travel. CEOs are responsible for inspections of schools in their counties but are unable to carry out regular visits due to lack of transport, and the goal of visiting each school once per semester is rarely achieved"* (GoL, 2009 p. 161).

The challenges which the decentralisation process in the education sector faces means that the MOE is more decentralised in theory than in practice. Nevertheless initiatives are taken to meet these challenges.

One of them is the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) which the MOE has prioritised since 2006. The aim of strengthening these local bodies is to improve school-level management and the collaboration between school, district and county level management (GoL, 2009). In spite of the increased focus on the importance of local school governance and the following attention of strengthening their capacity the PTAs are as well as the other levels of school governance facing severe constraints:

> "*At the institutional level, school governance is much as it has been for the last fifty years. (…) Many schools do not have governing boards and/or functional Parent Teacher Associations, even though PTAs are currently being encouraged through the school feeding program supported by WFP and its partners in close collaboration with the MOE. A random check on a number of those claiming to have these bodies quickly reveals that a good number are non-functional and/or are not functioning as required by existing legislation"* (GoL, 2009 p. 13).

To sum up the education sector in Liberia is in theory decentralised but in practice governed centrality from the MOE in spite of the *vertical integrated ministry* which means that effective school management at the county, district and local levels is limited as well is the accountability between the levels. The initiatives taken to strengthen the management and

accountability at the local level in terms of PTAs seem to be a matter of policy rather than practice. In the following section the PRS will be presented.

4.6 The Poverty Reduction Strategy & Education

Since Sirleaf-Johnson's entry in the presidency in 2006 Liberia has experienced stability and progress in many areas. Nevertheless there are still tremendous reconstruction and development challenges to be addressed (UN, 2008). Due to the deep-rooted structural, social and economic divisions that remain in the country it is still fragile and its recovery is vulnerable to deterioration into a violent conflict. Against this backdrop the government has developed a Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008-2011 (PRS) which emphasises the following four pillars as the way to recovery 1) Security 2) Economy 3) Law and Governance and 4) Infrastructure and Basic service delivery (GoL, 2008b). The four pillars are addressing important challenges in public administration. One of the main objectives of the PRS is to target the root causes for the long lasting conflict by developing new economic and political structures as well as addressing the consequences of the complicated past:

> *"(...) for Liberia to be successful, it cannot simply recreate the economic and political structures of the past, which produced widespread income disparities, economic and political marginalization, and deep social cleavages, and ultimately fuelled the conflict.*(…) *It must also directly address the consequences and legacies of decades of destruction, division and distrust, recognize and respond to the structural risk factors that predispose the country to violent conflict, and identify opportunities for institutionalizing peace"* (GoL, 2008b p. 13).

The horizontal equality in Liberia is important to establish in order to address the social divisions which have been a root cause of the conflict, and hence the access to education and other basic services is crucial. The exodus of a large part of the population has created a capacity deficit which hinders the development of an efficient and reliable public sector which can provide the services and security needed in order to maintain and consolidate the peace (GoL, 2008b).

During the civil war 65% of the educational facilities were destroyed and both the physical and the administrative infrastructure were ruined (GoL, 2008b). This has been devastating to the education sector in Liberia which was already a weak structure before the war c.f. the historic role of education. Schools were shattered and raided by the fighting coalitions and during the long lasting war not much renovation was initiated. All of the

teacher training colleges were destroyed or closed during the war and many teachers fled, became displaced or killed (Dunn-Marcos, et al., 2005). This situation led to a severe lack of teachers which is still problematic today as no teachers were graduated from the teacher training colleges during the 14 years of war. The extensive damage of the education sector "*made it difficult for children to attend school* [and has left] *an entire generation virtually uneducated"* (GoL, 2009 p. 3).

Education could easily have fitted into all of the pillars but was assigned to the Infrastructure and Basic service delivery pillar (GoL, 2008b). The education sector is under severe pressure as free and compulsory education has been declared with the new government but the lack of skilled teachers is massive at all levels of the system. This situation puts an extra pressure on the education sector which is already underfinanced as the government expenditure to the sector only ranges between 2.2-2.6 % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is far less than the recommended 6% ratio (GoL, 2008b). Relative to the total public spending education accounts for 11,4 % which is also less than recommended as the FTI suggest a bench mark on 20 % (GoL, 2009).

In spite of the role of education in the Liberian history education is today by many believed to be a magic bullet which leads to development. A Gallup Poll from 2007 showed that after reconstruction of roads, the Liberians found education to be the most important issue for the government to address (GoL, 2008b) and the enrolment rate for primary education has increased dramatically the last few years. In the PRS the government meets this development by stating that access and quality education at all levels are the main goals for the education achievement:

> *"During the PRS period, the Government's overall goal for education is to improve access to and the quality of relevant education at all levels, emphasizing the availability of Universal Primary Education and recognizing the needs of the disadvantaged, especially girls."* (GoL, 2008b p. 112)

In order to achieve the overall goal of improved access and quality in the education system the PRS points out seven target areas which covers several aspects of the education sector: Strengthen the curriculum; Improve access to quality, safe and hygienic schools; Recruit and train qualified teachers; Improve learning achievement and school completion rates; Strengthen the quality and accessibility of skills and vocational training; Improve the quality of tertiary education; Strengthen the overall governance, management and financial basis of

the education system. Currently the education sector in Liberia is nevertheless, as the general public administration, characterised by inefficiency and lack of financing. Together with this lack of financing the following issues are stated as the main challenges for the education sector in the PRS:

> *"Weak capacity for management and governance from central to the local level; an outdated curriculum and inadequate textbooks, chairs, desks, and school supplies; insufficient school access that limits the ability of every child, including girls and persons with disabilities, to exercise his/her right to quality education; insufficient numbers of well trained, qualified, and motivated teachers; an understaffed and over-crowded public university; and poor quality programs being offered at some institutions of higher learning"* (GoL, 2008b p. 111).

The education sector faces severe challenges which seem to be all-encompassing. In the attempt to target these difficulties the MOE has developed the Education Sector Plan 2010-2020 in order prioritise the endeavours. In the following the ESP and the prior strategy - the Liberian Primary Education Recovery Programme (LPERP) - will be elaborated. Concluding the chapter some of the challenges which the education sector faces will be touched upon as they are relevant for the later analysis of the ALP.

4.7 The education strategies for change

There are two central education documents which have been developed in order to guide the progress in the education sector. The first one is the LPERP from 2007 which was developed as a transition strategy to the gap between short-term emergency-type interventions and a comprehensive approach for the recovery of the primary education sub-sector. It covers eight components: Infrastructure expansion and improvement; Instructional materials and curriculum development; Teacher development; Accelerated learning programme; Advisory, supervision and assessment services; Strengthening education sector governance; Organizational capacity building and Institutional and implementation arrangements for the program. The second central document is the Education Sector Plan 2010-2020 which builds on and expands the work completed under the LPERP. An important difference between the two documents is that the LPERP is short-term and programmatic in nature and the ESP is more policy based and proposes strategies and actions to address specific policy objectives over the longer term. The ESP feeds into the PRS and has been designed to shape the road for

education in Liberia in the next decade. The aim of the plan is to feed into the MDG 2[17] and the six EFA goals[18]. The ESP is emphasising many of the same areas as outlined in the PRS and the LPERP which includes a focus on education at all levels including alternative education and recognition of the importance of reaching marginalised groups. Besides this it includes strategies to provide teachers for the expanding education system and strategies to improve governance, management, accountability and financial aspects of the education sector (GoL, 2009). In table 4.7 the nine components which the ESP covers are outlined with an emphasis on the main goals.

Table 4.7 Overview of the nine target areas of the ESP 2010-2020

Target area	Main goal
1. Making an Early Start in Addressing Social Disparities – Early Childhood Development Focusing on Pre-Primary Education	The main policy goal (…) is to ensure that all children achieve their full potential and are ready for primary schooling by providing quality, integrated ECD services and programs for all children from zero to age 5 through an inter-sectoral collaborative approach.
2. Achieving Universal Primary Education of Quality	To ensure that all school age children and others so desiring, receive and complete primary education of a quality that adequately prepares them for the next stage/phase of living and learning. The 'all' is inclusive of 'special needs' and 'vulnerable children' as well as those having 'manageable' emotional behavioural disorders and learning disabilities
3. Increasing Secondary Level Enrolment while Improving School Quality	Ensure that all school-age children and others so desiring receive and complete a junior high school program of quality and that as many as possible can move on to and complete a high-quality senior high school program (or its equivalent)

[17] MDG2: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (UN, 2000)

[18] The Education for All goals:
1) Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
2) Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3)Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes
4) Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6) Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (UNESCO, 2000a)

4. Addressing the Literacy and TVET Needs of the Nation	To increase the opportunities and chances of adults and youths becoming literate and making a greater contribution to the development of Liberia
5. Providing the Teachers for an Expanding System in Transition	To provide competent, well-qualified and motivated teachers for all educational institutions
6. Shaping our Future with Higher Education	To better regulate and monitor higher education and to improve the quality and relevance of programs and institutions of higher learning to ensure that certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded are of good repute and value and that the graduates contribute more to the betterment and development of the nation. Linked with this main goal is the need to develop the research capacity of universities.
7. Improving Governance, Planning, Management and Leadership	To outline the processes through which the Ministry of Education is to manage an efficient and accountable decentralized system able to deliver relevant learning and training opportunities of quality.
8. Monitoring for Quality Improvement and Accountability	To develop monitoring and supervisory mechanisms, procedures and practices that will provide useful information to guide MOE's actions and policies
9. Trade-offs, Financing and Fiscal Sustainability	

As table 4.7 illustrates the target areas correspond with the EFA goals except for the goal on gender. The gender issue is nevertheless a general target area throughout the ESP. In the literature on implementation of international policies in the education sector it is argued that usually the global goals do not transfer to the local level. This rejection of direct transfer is mainly due to an inconsistency with local norms and practices (Semali, 2007; Stomquist, 2007; Yamada, 2007). Based on this the ESP goals might therefore be argued to reflect a global discourse and respond to donor requirements rather than being a realistic 10 years plan.

As outlined in the previous section the education sector is facing tremendous challenges. The problem with a low level of capacities in terms of management and governance has already been mentioned. The challenges concerning school infrastructure, supplies and higher education will not be broached separately but might be included sporadically where relevant. In the following two aspects of the inadequate teacher situation

will be highlighted and the reform of the teacher training institutions in cooperation with United Nations Agency for International Development (USAID) is presented.

4.7.1 Teacher qualification

A lack of qualified teachers is a severe problem in Liberia and it is not until recently that the teacher training institutions (TTI) have been reopened. Furthermore the profession suffers from a low status and teacher absenteeism is a big problem as well as teachers not showing up on time for their teaching. In 2007 USAID in cooperation with the MOE initiated the Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP) aiming at rehabilitating three of the TTIs which had closed down during the war. This initiative was much needed and as explained in the ESP:

> *"There is little doubt that the quality of education provided in any country is very dependent on the quality of its teachers. Liberia has had the unfortunate experience of having its entire provision of teacher colleges and teacher training institutes destroyed, with no pre-service teachers being certified between 1986 and 2009. This has resulted in over 60% of teachers in primary schools being untrained and unqualified, with disastrous effects on the quality of learning available to students"* (GoL, 2009 p. 132).

The gap in the provision of qualified teachers is, as mentioned above, explaining the teacher shortage which Liberia is experiencing today. In 2008 the first cohort of 478 students was admitted at the TTIs and in 2009 the first students graduated with a C-certificate[19]. The total number of graduates from the three TTIs in 2009 has not been available but it seems reasonable to assume that there have been a least some drop-outs and hence the number is below the 478 students enrolled. It is estimated that there is currently a need for additionally 16.000 qualified teachers to provide the education in demand. In order to increase the enrolment at the TTIs a recent initiative announced admission free of charge[20]. This is done as the enrolment at the TTIs is lower than expected as the capacity of 710 students has not yet been fully used (USAID, 2009).

The 3 re-opened TTIs are currently providing pre-service training and in-service training. By providing the two types of training both the teachers who are already teaching but

[19] Pre-service training is a one year teacher training for high school graduates taking place at the teacher training institutions. In-service training is for teachers who are teaching in the classes but without having the c-certificate. The in-service training takes place in the districts in the weekends and holidays.

[20] The announcement was made during the time of fieldwork (September –November 2011)

do not have the required C-certificate as well as the new teachers are reached. The requirement of the C-certificate has been initiated due to a high degree of inconsistency in the provided teacher training programmes:

> *"During the years of conflict and immediately following the return to peace, the country's education donor partners worked to fill the gap left by the government's incapacity and provided short-term and emergency training programs for teachers, particularly at the primary level. The result of the various short-term primary teacher certification programs is that the C certificate now lacks uniformity"* (GoL, 2009 p. 132).

The C-certificate is required in order to teach in the primary schools and a B-certificate is required to teach in the secondary school and is obtained at the University of Liberia. The pre-service teacher training takes one year to complete and aims at training high school graduates who do not have previous experience with teaching. The in-service training is aiming at the teachers who are already teaching but do not have the required C-certificate. The in-service training takes one year and includes courses as well as supervision in the classrooms (USAID, 2008). In between the training in the beginning and in the end of the in-service training the teachers participate in ongoing training provided in the communities within a cluster of nearby schools. The LTTP has strived at keeping the two types of training similar in spite of their different structures (USAID, 2009). Available statistics show that two cohorts of students have graduated from the in-service training with 324 and 592 students respectively (USAID, 2009).

4.7.2 Teachers & payroll

In the LPERP from 2007 it was highlighted that there are severe problems with the government payroll for teachers. Six focal areas were identified in order to restore reliable payroll procedures. Among the focal areas are removing absent teachers from the payroll database and ensuring qualified teachers with a C-certificate will be added to the payroll database. The problem with the absent or so called ghost teachers have, according to the LPERP, been addressed as early as in 2006 but without much success. In the LPERP one of the targets is that: "*All teachers are paid promptly and accurately based on a "clean" payroll by 2008"* (GoL, 2007 p. 56). Along with the problem of getting the teacher on and off the payroll the time consuming procedures related to collecting the pay check is emphasised in the ESP where it is stated that a teacher can spend up till two weeks away from the school in order to collect his or her payment. This is due to logistically challenges and lack of banking

facilities for the teachers. In the LPERP the procedures of salary payment are connected with corruption and mistrust to those who have to handle the practicalities usually the DEOs and CEOs. This is expressed like the following: "*These anomalies are compounded by the absence of banking facilities in rural areas which enables those entrusted with salary payments to cash cheques for their own benefit"* (GoL, 2007 p. 55). In the ESP the problem with 'cleaning up' the payroll database is still emphasised as the risk of the current situation is that newly educated teachers will choose the private sector, rather than the public due to the uncertainties about payment.

5 The Accelerated Learning Programme

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the ALP worldwide, nationally and as an NRC emergency response to education. The first part introduces how ALP in general is implemented in post-conflict situations and the philosophy behind the ALP is outlined. The second part introduces the Liberian ALP. The third and last part describes the ALP as it is implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council and elaborates on how it is deviating from the national ALP.

5.1 ALP world wide

Children who have experienced conflict and those who are living in early recovery and post-conflict situations are at a distinct educational disadvantage (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). They might have had their education interrupted or might not have had access to education at all. They might have experienced or witnessed terrible events which need psychological care to process. Children in these situations might also need context specific knowledge to deal with the reality in which they are now living. Older children might want to get an education but may not be willing to attend primary school with the young children or there might be legislation preventing them from attending the regular primary education (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). The ALP is providing an opportunity for these children and is designed to meet their needs. By targeting this group the ALP is filling the gap of education provision for children who are not enrolled in the formal education system and the ALP is hence feeding into the EFA goals by reaching a marginalised group of out-of-school children.

5.1.1 ALP as a post-conflict response

During the last ten years education has increasingly been acknowledged as essential to include in the humanitarian response to emergencies based on the one hand on the positive psychosocial and societal outcomes education might lead to, and on the other hand based on the acknowledgement of the right to education even in emergencies (INEE, 2004). Education can mitigate a fragile situation through peace education and civic education which equip the citizens to hold their government accountable for ensuring basic needs and rights. Furthermore education represents hope of a peaceful future and for psychosocial reasons continuous education throughout fragile situations have a positive effect on children's further development (Sinclair, 2002). Education though never happens in a vacuum and therefore education is never neutral. Due to the symbolic role and structural nature of education it plays

a paradoxical role in fragile situations. Education can also have a negative effect on a fragile situation and can even cause conflict. Horizontal inequality between ethnic groups, gender, geography etc. is a major cause of instability and hence an important factor to be aware of in fragile situations (Dupuy, 2009; Mosselson, et al., 2009). In fragile situations it is likely that unequal access to education has been present even before the actual emergency or fragile situation has emerged. It might even have been one of the root causes of the crisis and consequently the underlying structures have to be approached in the process of stabilising the situation (Dupuy, 2009; Mosselson, et al., 2009). As education is political it may also become a target and both students as well as teachers are then at risk of attacks from rebel groups, governments and other stakeholders (UNESCO, 2010). In the attempt to ensure that educational programmes become a positive factor in the humanitarian response the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) was established in 2000. The network has developed the *Minimum Standards for Education - Preparedness, Response, Recovery* by which all member organisations should work.

Within this resent focus on the role of education in emergencies ALP has been widely used as an emergency response to education. Large scale ALPs have among others been implemented in Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan, Uganda, Afghanistan, DRC, Angola and Rwanda. The ALPs in Uganda, Liberia, South Sudan and Sierra Leone are all similar in design and implementation model and the ALP in Afghanistan is community based. Otherwise all the implemented ALPs have features in common (Nicholson, 2006). Sue Nicholson (2006) argues that accelerated learning (AL) in post-conflict situations usually is put into practice through programmes with distinct characteristics:

> "*An accelerated learning programme (ALP) promotes access to primary and secondary education for disadvantaged groups and older out-of-school youth. In an ALP, the required learning is completed in a shorter span of time and the goal is completion of primary education or integration into the formal system at an age appropriate level. The assumption is that older, more cognitively sophisticated children/youth will learn faster. Most ALPs complete two grades in one year. The curriculum incorporates appropriate life skill subjects and may include vocational education, and/or micro enterprise activities. An ALP is frequently donor funded, short term in nature, and focused on access, retention, and completion"* (Nicholson, 2006 p. 8).

Apart from similarities in the scope of the ALP the programme is also usually including components on teacher training and community mobilisation. The teacher training is done

because the ALP is based on the philosophy of AL which differs slightly from other teaching/learning approaches. More important, the AL is in line with the learner-centred approach to education. The teacher training component is included in order to sensitise the teachers to the principles of learner-centred education and endorse the accelerated learning approach in the classrooms (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). Besides this an emphasis is put on sensitising the teachers to see the school as a safe and welcoming learning environment. In post-conflict settings the safe learning environment is especially important for the psychological recovery of the children who have experienced war and crimes (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). Safety is furthermore an important issue as the school in some situations might have been unsafe especially for girls due to sexual harassment and abuse by teachers and older students. The teachers used in the ALP is either experienced teachers who are already teaching in the formal school or high school graduates who get some kind of extensive training by the implementing partner.

In spite of the good intensions of the teacher training component practice shows that the teacher training in many post-conflict countries is very limited and might be as short as 10-12 days without much follow up training. This situation occurs due to economic constraints and a pressure to train as many teachers as possible in order to minimise the shortage of teachers. The result might often be that the teachers keep teaching the way they have always done or copy the teaching they experienced in the school themselves which, Baxter and Bethke (2009) argues, often means rote-learning. The limited amount of teacher training is one of the key issues in the implementation of the ALP and depending on the implementing partner more or less follow up training can be initiated (Baxter & Bethke, 2009).

Community mobilisation is another component which is often included in the ALP. This is done in order to sensitize the parents to the programme and especially in order to make girls enrol. Involvement of PTAs and SMCs is also increasing the likelihood of the success and sustainability of the programme as it may foster an increased local ownership. In post-conflict countries the local community plays a central role in the maintenance and continuation of educational provision as the government might often not have the capacity to reach all areas – especially not the most rural ones. Due to the limitations of the government it is "*important to educate community members about the ways in which they can support a school and other activities for young people"* (Sinclair, 2002 p. 51). Based on the positive expectations to engagement and capacity development of community members PTA reforms have become a

best practice within the NGOs in international development as a way to increase civil society building:

> *"Because education is believed to motivate civic engagement among parents, particularly women, committed to improving their children's welfare, it is seen as a focal point for building civil society. Indeed, social scientists and humanitarian aid practitioners alike consider small civic associations such as PTAs to be ideal building blocks of civil society and to hold particular promise for repairing the social fabric that has been damaged by conflict"* (Burde, 2004 p. 175).

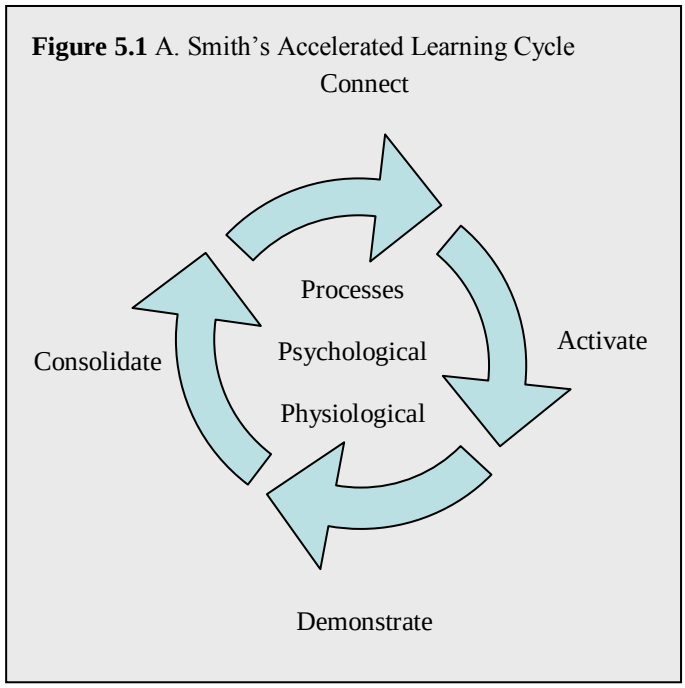
The ALP can be understood as a world model for education in post-conflict situations in the sense that it is a programme which has become the common response to targeting the over-aged children which often constitutes a great challenge for the country coming out of conflict. The scope of ALP is rather uniform and even when it deviates from the template it is based on a certain pedagogical philosophy and contains a teacher training component and an engagement of the local community, usually through the SMCs or PTAs. The world model of ALP is strengthened through the general increased focus on education. The Dakar Declaration and the EFA goals are playing a central role in this development and the ALP is feeding into this by promoting and providing education for an otherwise marginalised group of children. The world model of ALP is furthermore strengthened through the integration of education as an emergency response which especially the INEE has played a central role in promoting. The Minimum Standards which the INEE has developed can be argued to constitute the 'right way' of doing education in post-conflict situations and deviations from these Minimum Standards might be considered to be the 'wrong'. This role of INEE further strengthens the world model. During the last decade the important role of education in emergencies has become acknowledged and the ALP is within this development presenting a way to implement education as a post-conflict response.

5.1.2 The Philosophy of ALP

The philosophy of AL is based on brain research which has been operationalised into practical approaches for understanding learning which emphasises: "*the influence of motivation and self-belief; our preferred style of learning; knowing and using our different sorts of intelligence; and the knowledge of how we retain and recall information"* (Nicholson, 2006 p. 6).

Besides this the learning should take a departure point in individual needs and learning has to be motivating and fun. Accelerated learning is used in many different contexts and often *accelerated* referrers to: *"learners (…) fulfil their potential and reach levels of achievement that may seem beyond them. The learning is faster, deeper, and more proficient "* (Nicholson, 2006 p. 6). Alistair Smith (2008) has combined AL principles and practices into an AL model which describes the core elements of a physical and psychological learning environment for students to learn effectively (see figure 5.1.). The model is based on an understanding of how we learn rather than what we learn and emphasises four steps in the learning process. First the new subject has to be connected to something we already know and then we have to do something actively in relation to it. Thirdly the new subject should be demonstrated in order to show different understandings and then consolidated by answering the question *what did we learn?* This approach to teaching and learning is in line with the learner-centred pedagogy which is "*one of the most pervasive ideal in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and elsewhere"* (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008 p. 197)[21]. Learner-centred pedagogy originates from the thoughts of Jean Piaget (1951), Lev Vygotsky (1978) and John Dewey (1938) (Altinyelken, 2010; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). The main idea is that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner and that knowledge is developed on the basis of previous knowledge. Learning is hence a process between the learner and the environment.

Figure 5.1 A. Smith's Accelerated Learning Cycle



The learner-centred pedagogy is widespread in the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) because social and economic change is believed to require educational reform and the educational reform depends on, among other things, changes of classroom practices through learner-centred education (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). Furthermore the majority of SSA

[21] The terms *learner-centred*, *child-centred* and *out-come based* are used by the aid and financing organisation without much distinction (Chisholm and Leyendecker 2008).

countries are signatories to international agreements as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990), The Dakar Accord and the Millennium Development Goals (April 2000) and are thereby bound to change educational policy and practice in order to realise them and within this the "*attention is focused on curricular policy and practice"* (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008 p. 198). The learner-centred pedagogy is often assumed to be in opposition to the traditional approach to teaching and learning in African countries. This approach is teacher-centred and authoritarian and is characterised as rote learning. The shift from using teacher-centred to learner-centred pedagogies requires according to Altinyelken (2010) the following four areas of change:

> *"A shift from traditional teaching to child-centred teaching assumes changes in four areas: a fundamental change in views on the nature of knowledge, students and their role, teachers and their role, and classroom organisation in general. Within child-centred approaches, since learning is viewed as a natural and constructive process, the most productive learning experiences are considered to take place when learning is relevant and meaningful to students"* (Altinyelken, 2010 p. 153).

The question of capacity to turn the reformed curriculum into practice is critical for the outcome of the reform. The ALP is a temporary programme implemented by international partners and it might therefore not always have a direct link to the reform of the education sector. In Liberia ALP is nevertheless included in the LPERP and the ESP as a reform strategy and hence the capacity developed through the ALP might have a positive influence on the general level of capacity within the education sector which, as stated above (see chapter 4), in general is low. The approach of the implementing ALP partners to capacity development can therefore be argued to play a role in the process of internalising the learner-centred pedagogy in the education system. In the following the scope of the ALP in Liberia will be presented with an emphasis on design, management and challenges.

5.2 ALP in Liberia – A national initiative

The ALP was introduced in Liberia as early as 1999 when there was a short time of peace. Due to the resuming of the conflict the programme was nevertheless not scaled up until later on. The ALP was implemented by MOE and UNICEF based on the scope of the Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE) - the ALP - from Uganda. The programme consists of the usual ALP elements and targets over-aged children (10-18) who have missed out of school or had their education disrupted. In the PRS the ALP is described as: "*a parallel primary intervention designed to address the basic education needs of young adults who missed out on primary education"* (GoL, 2008b p. 112). The ALP was intended for children whose education had been interrupted during the war and who had a basic level of literacy and numeracy but reality has shown that most of the children attending ALP has never been to school before (Nicholson, 2007). The ALP allows the students to complete the primary school in three years instead of six, covering grade 1&2 (Level I), grade 3&4 (Level II) and grade 5&6 (Level III). Students can transfer from ALP into the formal school when they have the appropriate age for the grade or upon graduation enrol in secondary education. Apart from this the ALP consist of a long line of characteristics which includes the ALP to be free of charge, regular supervision and monitoring of the ALP classes, training of the ALP teachers and close cooperation with the PTAs (See Box 5.1 for the full list).

Box 5.1 ALP Characteristics

- No tuition fees
- Communities and/or schools selected based on the recommendations of the MOE /County Education Officer (CEO)
- Community mobilisation activities for student registration
- Cooperation with the school Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Classes held in the afternoon session of the MOE school
- Each ALP level is taught following the MOE academic year
- Selection of a principal and two teachers per level from the MOE school
- Provision of an incentive for the ALP teachers and principals
- Provision of a pre-service (PRESET) teacher training course of eight to ten days
- Provision of in-service (INSET) teacher training courses of two to five days facilitated by MOE Master Trainers
- Provision of the ALP Curriculum and Teacher's Manuals
- Supervision by MOE staff at county, district and school level
- Regular supervision and monitoring by IP field staff

Source: (MoE, 2008)

The objectives and expected outcome of the ALP is described in the ALP Policy Guidelines as follows (MoE, 2008 p. 8):

Objectives

- *Facilitate school participation of older children who would otherwise stay out of school*
- *Integrate in and out of school children of 10-18 years into their age appropriate grades in the regular school system though and accelerated learning approach*
- *Mainstream gender, life skills and HIV/AIDS education into the school programme*

Outcomes

- *Students will be provided an accelerated primary education with integrated health and life skills*
- *Students will be prepared for entry into the formal education system or will be better prepared to enter the work force*

The original target from the LPERP was to reach 300.000 over-aged children by 2010 but this has not happened for various reasons (GoL, 2009). As table 5.1 shows, the enrolment increased dramatically when the ALP was scaled up and covered most of the 15 counties in 2006. In 2008 the ALP finally covered all 15 counties and more than 75.000 students have been enrolled in the programme (GoL, 2009, p. 57).

Table 5.1 ALP enrolment figures (1999-2003 + 2006/07)

Year	Total enrolment	% girls
Pilot	771	n/a
1999/2000	3402	46%
2000/2001	5146	42%
2001/2002	4370	46%
2002/2003	4969	47%
2003/2004	n/a	n/a
2004/2005	n/a	n/a
2005/2006	n/a	n/a
2006/2007	53.697	46%

(Source: Nicholson, 2007)

In 2006 when the programme was scaled up in the first place the number of over-aged children in the primary school was massive and as many as 85% of students in grade 1 were aged 8-20. In total 73%[22] of all primary students (436.040) were over-age for their grade (Nicholson, 2007). The numbers indicate that there was a great need for ALP by the time it was scaled up. On the one hand the positive aspect of the situation could be that the over-aged

[22] In 2007 this number was reduced to approximately 63% c.f. chapter 5

children were actually in school, but on the other hand it usually creates some problems when the primary school is filled up with children too old for the level. One of the problems is that it creates a difficult learning environment when the age range is this extensive. Another one is that parents might not be willing to let their small children attend the school together with youngsters and adults (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). Apart from this the over-aged students are taking up space from the group of children in the official school age:

> *"One of the benefits of accelerated learning programmes is that they reduce crowding in the formal primary school while at the same time providing older children within a limited age range with the possibility of the interactive learning techniques need for a quality educational opportunity. If over-aged children have access to alternative educational opportunities that allow them to complete their primary, there will be fewer over-aged children in regular formal education classes, which in turn will free up more space in the formal education classroom for younger children"* (Baxter & Bethke, 2009 p. 65).

The original target for ALP was not met in 2010 as only 25 % of the expected number of students had been enrolled. As mentioned in chapter 4 the ESP suggests that one of the reasons for this might be that the relative high number of over-aged students in the formal school limits the incentive to choose the alternative ALP.

In the ALP Policy Guidelines it is stated that the ALP in Liberia follows the accelerated learning principles which is described in seven focal points which emphasise: A safe and supportive learning environment; To connect the learners with their previous knowledge in the learning situation; Provide the learners with visual as well as auditory and kinaesthetic inputs; Provide an overview of what is to be learnt first; Use embedded questions and essential vocabulary and Make a review throughout the learning activity and preview what the learner's next learning experience would be. These focal points are very well in line with the above outline accelerated learning philosophy and it is also in line with the learner-centred pedagogy which emphasises the previous knowledge of the learner as departure point for learning. The ALP is based on the primary school curriculum but in a condensed form. The curriculum includes the four core subjects: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Besides this there are complimentary subjects added to the ALP curriculum which includes Agriculture, Physical Education, Peace/Human Rights Education and HIV/AIDS prevention. The curriculum for the national ALP has been developed in cooperation with the following: "*A group of education specialists from the MoE, UNESCO, UNICEF, University of*

Liberia, WAEC, CREDO and Save the Children Fund UK (SCF-UK)" (MoE, 2008 p. 15). The Teachers Manual was similarly developed in cooperation with a group of education specialists and includes a manual for each core subject with an emphasis on participatory methods.

Most teachers selected for ALP (except for the NRC and IBIS schools) also teach in formal primary schools and conduct ALP classes in the afternoon session of the MOE public schools (MoE, 2008). The teachers already employed in the education sector attend ten days pre-service training in the accelerated learning principles and a yearly refresher course of 2-5 days. The training of the ALP teachers have been criticised for not being sufficient as: "*The PRESET*[23] *course was designed for qualified, extremely knowledgeable and experienced teachers. As most ALP teachers are not qualified or experienced the PRESET course is at too high a level for them to fully participate"* (Nicholson, 2007 p. 10). This is a problem which applies to ALP teacher training in general as it is unrealistic to expect teachers to re-orient their teaching based on a ten days training. As mentioned earlier the traditional approach to teaching in Liberia is teacher-centred and emphasises rote learning and the teachers (trained and qualified or not) tend to continue teaching the way they were taught themselves if the ALP teacher training is not followed up by continuous training and supervision (Baxter & Bethke, 2009).

5.2.1 Management of ALP

The ALP is coordinated by the ALP Unit which is based in the Bureau of Primary Education in the Ministry of Education (c.f. figure 4.2). The ALP Unit employs one coordinator and three advisors who are all recruited from departments within the ministry. In 2008 the ALP Unit developed a set of ALP policy guidelines in order to streamline the national ALP which has been implemented by ten international partners in the different counties (See table 5.2). In the ALP Evaluation Report from 2007 it is stated that even though the ALP has been implemented by several partners there has been a fairly high degree of consistency by the implementing partners (Nicholson, 2007). There are some deviations through and NRC is one of the implementing partners who differ distinctively. These deviations will be accounted for in section 5.3.

[23] Pre-service training

Table 5.2 Implementing ALP partners

Implementing Partners	**County**
Children's Assistance Programme (CAP) funded by UNICEF	Grand Gedeh, Maryland, Bomi, Montserrado
Community and Human Development Agency (CODHA) funded by UNICEF	Nimba, Lofa, Bong,
Save the Children UK (SCF-UK)	Bong, Grand Gedeh, Montserrado
Creative Associates (CAII)	Maryland, Grand Gedeh, Nimba, Lofa, Bong, Montserrado
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu
Visions in Action (VIA)	Montserrado, Margibi
Monrovia Consolidated Schools System (MCSS)	Montserrado
Lutheran Church of Liberia School System (LCLSS)	Nimba, Bong, Lofa, Montserrado
IBIS	Grand Gedeh, Maryland, River Gee, Grand Cru
The International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Nimba, Lofa,

The ALP Policy Guidelines state that: "*Any NGO which wants to implement the ALP program should liaise with the Department of Instruction's Accelerated Learning Program Unit within the Bureau of Primary Education"* (MoE, 2008 p. 13). Besides this the roles and responsibilities of the implementing partners are to (MoE, 2008 p. 17):

- *Provide funding and technical assistance for the implementation of the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)*
- *Review ALP implementation reports and make inputs for the overall improvements and development of the ALP*
- *Participate in regular ALP technical and coordination meetings as required by MOE*
- *Ensure proper coordination and collaboration in ALP activities in terms of overlapping functions*

Apart from describing the relationship between the ALP Unit and the implementing partners the roles of the CEOs, DEOs and PTAs in relation to the ALP are also outlined in the ALP Guidelines. The role of the CEOs is to represent the MOE at the county level and to coordinate ALP at the county level through coordination meetings and sectoral meetings. Besides this monitoring of the ALP implementation and payment of teacher incentives are among their responsibilities as well as reporting annually to the MOE. The role of the DEOs is to a larger extent to conduct the direct supervision of the ALP teachers and to collect data and statistics as well as ensuring a good relationship with PTAs and the communities. They also have to regularly submit reports to the CEOs. The role of the PTA is outline in the following five points (MoE, 2008 p. 16):

- *Volunteer labour force in construction of classrooms, offices, toilets and store rooms*
- *Be present during distribution of school materials/supply by MOE to ensure transparency and accountability*
- *Ensure the proper distribution of WFP provided food rations to ALP school students*
- *Maintain close relationship among learners and their teachers*
- *Ensure security for students and school property*

The outlining of the roles and responsibilities of the vertical layers of the school governance institutions should be seen in the light of the decentralisation process which in theory is happening in Liberia. This indicates that, as with the sector in general, the governance of the ALP might as well be challenged in terms capacities at the county, district and community levels. It is nevertheless important that the implementing partners are taking this aspect into account in their implementation of the ALP:

> *"The strengthening of local capacity for planning and management of education systems and projects is often overlooked in the haste to establish programmes that reach children, adolences or adults. Capacity-building is crucial for the sustainability of the benefits intended however."* (Sinclair, 2002 p. 83).

Concluding this section some of the challenges which the ALP is facing will be elaborated before the NRC ALP is presented. The challenges included are funding and the future of the ALP. The elaboration of these two challenges is based on the document *ALP – Which Way Forward?* which was developed by the ALP Unit in 2009 and outlines the future prospects of the ALP.

5.2.2 Challenges

The ALP in Liberia is facing many challenges and some of the most prevailing are lack of monitoring and supervision: expanding access to ALP, providing sufficient technical skills training; delayed distribution of ALP instructional materials and non-existent financial support from the MOE (MoE, 2009a). In spite of all the challenges outlined here which are crucial for the success of the ALP the future of the programme is the central point which will be elaborated here. This issue involves the non-existent financial support from the MOE and the confusion which exist around the phase out of the programme.

The ALP was never meant as a permanent programme as it was targeting the children who had their education interrupted due to the civil war. In the ESP it is stated that:

> *"It is evident that the program will wind down in two years' time and no more new intakes will be provided in the 2010/2011 school year. A number of ALP implementing partners have given notice to end their support to the program. With the ESP categorically stating that the age of starting school should be enforced and that no child should be tested on admission to Grade 1, there should soon be no more need for ALP"* (GoL, 2009 p. 29).

It is natural that some of the implementing partners have indicated their phase-out since the usual humanitarian programming have a time span of approximately 3 years. It nevertheless came as a surprise for many both in the MOE and among the implementing partners that the ALP was to phase out already in 2010/11. The ALP Unit argued that there is still a great need for ALP as the conventional school is still not accessible to all due to lack of schools and general poverty and hence a great number of children are continuously not enrolled in school at the official age (MoE, 2009a). In order to provide alternative strategies for the phase out the ALP Unit in 2009 developed a document suggesting six different options for the future of ALP[24]. The suggestions ranged between extending the ALP, redesigning ALP to include technical and vocational elements and providing MOE funding for alternative education. Especially the funding is a great challenge as the MOE does not provide any funding for the ALP itself and rely 100% of external funding (MoE, 2009a). The MOE explains the lack of funding:

> *"No aspect of the MOE implementation plan developed for this component used government funds as it was assumed that the program has had adequate partner*

[24] ALP – Which Way Forward? (2009)

support. In 2010 however, the MOE will use some of the remaining EPF[25] *to pay the incentives (that have been pegged at 50% of the teachers' monthly salary of $100 in 2010) to ALP teachers and cover the re-fresher training for the year"* (GoL, 2009 p. 29).

The EPF resources are funds provided by the donors (primarily the government of the Netherlands, UNICEF and the Open Society Institute) but controlled by the MOE. The purpose of the fund, which was established in 2008, was to ease the transition from emergency to development:

"In the context of reduced humanitarian financing and the absence of regular development funding, our intention was to assist in moving the financing agenda forward by finding mechanisms that would build both the capacity of government to handle larger resource flows to the sector and the confidence of donors to contribute larger amounts to Government." (UNICEF, 2009)[26]

It is therefore a positive development that they are willing to spend some of the EPF on the ALP which has otherwise not been prioritised. The general lack of funding means that the programme is donor driven rather than guided by MOE interests because the MOE is constrained in its ability to carry out the monitoring and supervision. By the time the fieldwork was conducted the ALP was still in operation. The new Minister of Education[27] has prolonged the ALP maybe as long as 2018, but this has nevertheless not been confirmed. This means that there is still not made any clear decisions about the future of ALP. This has some consequences for the management and coordination of the programme as the monthly ALP coordinating meetings, which otherwise have been held regularly between the ALP Unit and the implementing partners, have been put on hold. Besides this it causes confusion among the implementing partners, the EOs at the county and district level and in the communities as no one knows whether the ALP is continuing or not. The phase out announcement has caused several implementing partners to phase-out their programmes among others NRC who closed down their ALP by December 2010. In the Final Evaluation of the NRC ALP the confusion is noticed:

"Whereas there is no clearly articulated exit policy for the ALP as of now, several policy proposals have been made and are under consideration. The MoE argues

[25] Education Pooled Fund.

[26] http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/2009_2339.html Retrieved 22.08.2011

[27] The new Minister of Education took office in 2010 – after the ESP was developed

> *that the ALP's continued implementation on a project basis is not sustainable and it rather supports the creation of a longer term program, particularly as the ministry moves towards a sector wide approach (SWAp) and as the country as a whole moves towards the reconstruction and development phase. Information abound suggests that USAID has expressed interest in supporting the MoE with the development of an alternative program targeting youth between 15 – 35 years. While the details are scanty, it is believed that the program will address some of the concerns that have been raised regarding the need to equip the over-aged children and youth with relevant knowledge and appropriate skills that will increase their productive capacity"* (Nkutu, Bang, & Tooman, 2010 p. 6).

The unclear management of the ALP by the government indicates that the government is not very consistent in its implementation of its own policy in this regard. This is in spite of ALP being a part of the overall national education strategy and considered by the government to be a parallel to the official primary school. The future of the country wide ALP is not yet clear but the ALP Unit seems to favour a slight change of the current ALP in order for it to target the oldest of the students and including more technical and vocational training[28]. In the ESP it is furthermore stated the: "*USAID is developing a more skills oriented cost – effective program to replace the ALP/Plus that was being supported under the previous program"* (GoL, 2009 p. 29).

In the last section of this chapter the ALP as it has been implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council will be elaborated. The program mainly consists of three overall components which each will be presented. Areas where the NRC ALP is deviating from the national ALP and the ALP Guidelines will be emphasised and explained where possible.

5.3 The Norwegian Refugee Council & ALP

The presence of the Norwegian Refugee Council in Liberia is based on its global mandate to provide humanitarian assistance activities to refugees and internally displaced persons emphasising to *"promote and protect the rights of all people who have been forced to flee their countries or homes within their countries"* (NRC, p. 1). Protecting the rights of refugees and IDPs are also including their right to education and the educational focus of NRC is:

> *"Primary teaching activities for children and young people must be initiated rapidly to provide the inherent protection a structured daily life can offer against*

[28] Interview with representatives from the ALP Unit

abuse, neglect and forced recruitment to armed forces, as well as to safeguard the right to education. Teaching activities must be based on the needs of the children in each individual situation. Teacher training, guidance and development of teaching materials are included under this component" (NRC, p. 4).

NRC is implementing education programmes in both acute emergencies and long term conflict situations where ever the need is and NRC has its presence (NRC, 2009). NRC has been operating emergency education programmes in Liberia since 2003 beginning with the Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP) in the IDP camps around Monrovia from 2003-2005. Since then NRC has established ALP schools in Bomi, Gbarpolu and Grand Cape Mount County in the Western part of Liberia as well as four technical and vocational Youth Education Pack (YEP) programmes (Nkutu, et al., 2010). The three counties are bordering Sierra Leone and were heavily affected during the war and has later on been characterised by a high prevalence of returnee communities. Today this region is the second poorest in the country (GoL, 2008a).

From 2007 to 2010 NRC has facilitated two full cycles[29] of ALP and 7269 students have been through the programme – 45% of these were girls (Nkutu, et al., 2010). Comparative to this number 75.820 children have on a national basis been enrolled between 2007-2010 (MOE, 2009b). As mentioned earlier the target was to reach 300.000 within this timeframe. 125 ALP schools have been established in the three counties. Not all implementing partners have built new schools for ALP. In most cases ALP uses the classrooms in the conventional school in the afternoon. Because NRC is building schools where there are no other schools the NRC ALP schools are in several cases the only school in the community.

5.3.1 Teachers & teacher training

The NRC has trained 249 teachers. The NRC ALP teacher training focuses on the subjects as well as the AL principles. The teacher training is described as the following in the Final Evaluation of the NRC ALP:

"All the teachers have undergone various levels of training including: pre-service training (PRESET) where teachers have been equipped with subject specific expertise, AL principles, effective teaching practices, lesson preparation, teacher/ community collaboration and administration and record keeping. HIV/AIDS, SEA

[29] One cycle is three years of ALP

> *and Child Protection, psychosocial, child psychology issues are now also included in the training program. The PRESET has been augmented by regular in-service training opportunities and supervision and support"* (Nkutu, et al., 2010 p. 22).

The NRC PRESET training lasts for 10 days which is similar to the national ALP. In the evaluation of the national ALP from 2007 it is nonetheless stated that the NRC differs from the other ALP implementing partners. The NRC ALP is using their own trainers to conduct the 10 day PRESET course. Usually this training is conducted by MOE trainers. The PRESET training is followed up by one day training workshops every two weeks and weaker teachers attend furthermore 6-8 district based workshops. Apart from this NRC supervisors are regularly supervising the ALP teachers and are giving them feed back on their teaching. In comparison the national ALP teacher training follows the PRESET up with a yearly refresher course of 2-5 days so at this point NRC is deviating. The NRC has since 2009 harmonised their ALP teacher training in order to fit the MOE requirements for qualified teachers. This means that 84 ALP teachers have taken a C-certificate. The Final Evaluation Report of the NRC ALP states that the harmonisation with the MOE requirements: "*is the beginning of the process to seek government accreditation and pave way for their* [The teachers] *integration in the government's teaching force"* (Nkutu, et al., 2010 p. 23). The requirement of the government to hold a C-certificate has only been effectuated since the ESP was developed in 2009. Prior to 2009 there has not been a national emphasis on the level of qualification of the teachers and therefore NRC has only initiated the harmonisation with government requirement since it was announced. Another point where NRC differs from many of the other implementing partners is on the topic of recruiting teachers. Usually primary school teachers who are already on the MOE payroll are recruited to also teach in the ALP classes in the afternoon. The NRC is recruiting high school graduates who are not yet employed in the education sector and they are only teaching in the ALP schools. This is done in order to train and contribute with additional teachers and in order to make sure that the teachers are not too tired to teach in the ALP classes in the afternoon, because they have been in the regular primary school in the morning (Nicholson, 2007).

The teacher training by NRC is emphasising accelerated learning methods and the curriculum is equally emphasising the subject and the teaching methods:

> *"Accelerated learning is dependent on the use of ALP teaching methodologies. It is apparent that the ALP curriculum has put as much emphasis on the information*

to be given to learners, as it has on the manner in which it should be delivered. The teaching methodologies are taking into account the age, experiences and different learning styles of the over-aged learners" (Nkutu, et al., 2010 p. 20).

5.3.2 Community mobilisation

The NRC ALP community mobilisation component consists of two initiatives: training of community mobilisers and establishment and training of PTAs.

Since 2007 the NRC has trained community mobilisers to create awareness of the importance of education. This was initiated due to high drop out rates and irregular school attendance from the ALP students. The features of the community mobilisation component include the training and recruitment of one community mobiliser from each community where ALP schools have been established as well as one NRC Community supervisor per county. The role of the community mobiliser is to sensitise the communities on topics as child protection, health and hygiene and women's rights as well as mobilisation of community members to send their children to school and assist in the construction and maintenance of the school building (Nkutu, et al., 2010). In the ALP guidelines it is emphasised that ALP should include community mobilisation activities with regards to encouraging student registration to the programme. In general it is a part of the ALP to sensitise the community to ALP in order to make the parents send their age appropriate children to the programme (Nicholson, 2006). It is unclear how the implementing partners in general have been working with community mobilisation.

Since 2009 PTAs have in accordance with government regulations been established or reactivated at all the NRC ALP schools (Nkutu, et al., 2010). The PTAs have received training on topics as how to govern the PTA, school maintenance, project planning and fundraising and they have attended workshops in income generating activities. In the Final Evaluation Report of the NRC ALP it is argued that the PTAs have a crucial role to play in the future:

"The presence of PTAs which have received some training on their governance management roles is also an important factor for the sustainability of the schools and education programs as a whole in the community. PTAs have voiced their commitment to ensuring that the schools are maintained. The response from members in one community was as follows: "We suffered for this school, so of course we will maintain it! The evidence of this capacity is however still limited" (Nkutu, et al., 2010 p. 38).

As a part of the phase out strategy the local NGO CARD has taken over the responsibility of training the PTAs and community mobilisers. From the ALP Policy Guidelines outlined above the role and responsibilities of the PTA is to volunteer in maintaining the school and play an active role in ensuring distribution of food and school supply as well as protecting the students and properties. The NRC training of the PTAs is broader than this as they have had a strong emphasis on the PTA management and on how the PTAs can contribute to a better future themselves.

5.3.3 Support to administration and management

During the years the NRC have run the ALP they have cooperated with the local EOs. Nevertheless the Final Evaluation of the NRC ALP stated that one of the weaknesses of the NRC ALP has been a lack of engagement of the government in the programme. As a part of the phase out strategy the NRC has during the last part of 2010 (August – December) seconded NRC supervisors from the ALP to the district and county offices to develop the capacity of the local staff. Alongside with the secondment of staff they have also conducted several workshops on administration, recordkeeping and monitoring. The aim has been to equip the EOs to continue the work of the ALP supervisors and keep up a decent standard regarding monitoring of the schools and reporting to the MOE. As the NRC closed the last ALP schools in July 2010 and the government has chosen not to continue ALP in the three districts the purpose of the phase out strategy has been to ensure that the good practices from the ALP have as much as possible been transferred to the conventional schools. It is not certain whether other implementing partners have included capacity development of the EOs as part of their ALP but it seems unlikely. On the other hand other implementing partners might have had a closer cooperation with the government in general from the onset.

To sum up in general the NRC ALP is to a large extent feeding into the overall frame of the national ALP. Nevertheless the programme does deviate from the national ALP in certain areas. The major difference is that NRC is recruiting high school graduates rather than teachers already teaching in the formal system as a result of this their follow up training of the teachers is a bit more extensive than the national ALP teacher training. The NRC has furthermore built schools which are now handed over to the government. Besides this the NRC ALP has had a great focus on the communities and PTAs with an emphasis on training of the management of the PTAs. Finally the NRC ALP is deviating from the national ALP and other implementing partners by having an intensive half year period of staff seconded to

the EOs at the county and district levels with a direct aim of developing capacity regarding administration, registration and supervision.

6 Voices from the field

The purpose of this chapter is to present the point of view from the people involved in the implementation of the ALP. How have the employees and the volunteer community members experienced that ALP has impacted the education sector as well as their attitude and practices regarding education in general? And especially regarding education management and administration? Have they learned something from the cooperation with the NRC which they intent to carry on doing? In the following the responses from the interviewees will be presented in categories reflecting NRC ALP components presented in the precious chapter.

6.1 The general perception of the ALP

The ALP is in general perceived as a positive contribution to the Liberian education system. This point of view has been expressed by all the interviewed groups. A major topic which emerged in all the interviews was the importance of the target group of ALP – the over-aged out-of-school children with no other possibilities of getting an education. They all shared the opinion that it would be a great embarrassment for the over-aged children to sit in the classes with the much younger primary school students. Out of concern for this group of children there was also in general expressed a great concern for the future and all of the interviewed groups emphasised that there is still a great need for ALP:

> *"Well, you cannot call it off right away because we still have our brothers and sisters in the rural areas that need education and ALP and some of them feel shamed by sitting with the little children but when they get in the ALP class and they see their peer group and they all sit together and sit together… there is a need of ALP from my view of seeing it"* (INT2/MOE/18.10.10).

6.2 Teachers & teacher training

In relation to teachers the responses from the interviewees fell into two distinct categories: the ALP pedagogy and the problem with ALP teachers getting on the government payroll. The first category concerns the issue of whether the accelerated learning methods, which are used in the ALP, are perceived to be deviating from the methods used in the conventional school. A major topic expressed in this regard was the reopened teacher training institutions and the newly announced requirement of a C-certificate to teach in the primary school. The second category concerns the issue of whether the training of additional teachers is perceived to be a contribution to the education sector in terms of supplementing the

national teacher staff. A major topic which was raised by the interviewees in this regard was the problematic situation of getting on the government payroll when the ALP phased out and the teachers were handed over to the conventional schools.

6.2.1 The ALP pedagogy

In the Ministry of Education the interviewed staff from the Bureau of Teacher Education and the staff from the ALP Unit had quite different opinions regarding the link between the conventional primary curriculum and the ALP curriculum. The first expressed a sharp division between ALP and the conventional school and it was emphasised that ALP has its own curriculum and purpose and the conventional school has a different one. In the ALP Unit there was an emphasis on ALP using the same curriculum as in the primary school but just in a condensed form. Regarding the teaching methods used in the conventional school and the ALP respectively two different opinions were again expressed. The first explained that there is a new curriculum in the teacher training institutions which focuses on learner-centred methodology. She told that it is now possible to attend pre- or in-service training in order to obtain the C-certificate and she further explained that because of the new curriculum in the teacher training institutions and due to the requirement of a C-certificate to teach there are no longer a difference in the use of methods in the two types of schools. From the ALP Unit there was a slightly different focus and a critical point of view regarding the teaching in the ALP classes was expressed by one of the staff as he thought that the participatory methods are only used in the classes when someone from the ministry comes by to check up on the schools.

The two interviewed CEOs both shared a point of view with the staff from the Bureau of Teacher Education as they expressed that the methodology used in the ALP classes is not much different from what teachers trained at the new teacher training institutions use, but they did think though that the conventional teachers can learn something from the ALP teachers.

One DEO expressed that he did not think the methodology used in ALP is different from what teachers trained at the new teacher training institutions are using. Another expressed that she saw a great difference when she supervised teachers in the ALP and conventional schools respectively, and one expressed that he himself had learned something new about teaching from the ALP: "*I understand now that the teaching has to be participatory the students should ask questions and participate…the students should be part and parcel of the lesson!"* (INT5/DEO/12.10.10). Several of the DEOs also expressed that the

ALP teachers are inspiring the conventional teachers and that the ALP teachers are more reliable and disciplined as they come on time and do a good job. One of the DEOs explained that this might have been due to the incentives that the ALP teachers have received from the NRC while they have been teaching at the ALP schools.

The two head teachers interviewed expressed conflicting perspectives regarding the methodologies used in the conventional school and the ALP classes as one of the head teachers stressed that there is no difference and the other one emphasised that there is a difference. The latter explained that there is a difference and emphasised that in spite of the different methods used in the ALP and conventional school respectively the conventional teachers agree with the ALP teachers on the use of methods because they are themselves receiving in-service training which uses the same methods. Both of the head teachers shared a point of view with the DEOs and expressed that the ALP teachers are inspiring the conventional teachers and it is stressed that the ALP teachers are more reliable and disciplined as they come on time and do a good job. Both of the head teachers, who had been trained in the national ALP, furthermore explained that they had gained a lot of skills from the ALP which they felt had increased their quality of teaching. In their current role as head teachers they could pass on their skills to the other teachers. Especially lesson planning and giving advice on child-centred methods were emphasised.

The NRC supervisors who were interviewed all agreed that the reopened teacher training institutions are training the teachers in participatory methods. Some of the NRC supervisors made the point that the difference between the use of methods lays more in whether the teachers are old or new teachers as the older ones have not learned the modern methods. Nevertheless they also agreed that the conventional teachers can learn from the NRC ALP teachers. They expressed that there is a difference in the teaching by the conventional teachers and the ALP teachers and that the ALP teachers are better at lesson planning and lesson presentations. Also the ALP teachers are used to the monitoring and are hence on time for the classes. All of them expressed that they have experienced that ALP teachers are tutoring the conventional teachers. One of the groups of NRC supervisors expressed that sometimes the conventional teachers do not want to ask the ALP teachers to help them.

6.2.2 Payroll

At the Ministry of Education the interviewed staff did not comment on whether the ALP teachers trained by NRC are a contribution to the national teaching force. Rather the current situation with erasing ghost teachers from the payroll and the long procedures of getting the right teachers registered was what the staff talked about. The staff from the ALP Unit explained that the current situation with the ALP teachers not getting paid is the fault of the CEOs as they have employed the ALP teachers without getting them on the ministry payroll: "*At that time because there were people coming to ALP – you know the CEOs employed them without them coming on payroll and that caused the payroll of this ministry to rise and rise"* (INT1/MOE/15.10.10). In general the two interviewed ALP Unit staff expressed mistrust to the EOs further out in the system.

The CEOs had a different point of view and they both explained that the main problem is that teachers are not getting on payroll due to the heavy bureaucracy in the public administration. One of the CEOs explained that it is a problematic situation because the teachers cannot be hold responsible when they are not paid and there are no means of sanctioning if the teacher for instance is not coming to classes on time. Both of the interviewed CEOs expressed that they are happy with the additional teachers trained by NRC, but they are being critical because of the problems with keeping the teachers in the counties when they are not being paid. Besides the lack of salary it was also stressed by the CEOs that many of the teachers do not want to be in the rural areas and also it is easier for the teachers to find jobs in private schools closer to the capital where the salary is paid more regularly. One of the CEOs was especially pointing at the uselessness of the NRC school buildings if there are no teachers to teach in the schools and does therefore not think that ALP is solving the problematic teacher situation.

The DEOs were not critical towards the additional teachers trained by NRC and it was expressed by all of them that the teachers from ALP make a difference and are a positive contribution to the schools in the three counties. But the DEOs agreed with the CEOs that the main problem, regarding the ALP teachers, is that they are not getting on the payroll due to the heavy bureaucracy. Several of the DEOs expressed that they are encouraging the teachers as much as they can to make them to stay and to have patience with the slow procedures. Apart from the lack of salary it was also stressed by some of the DEOs that many of the

teachers do not want to be in the rural areas and also it is easier for the teachers to find jobs in private schools closer to the capital where the salary is paid more regularly.

The interviewed PTAs supported the point of view that the main problem regarding the lack of teachers is that teachers are not getting on payroll due to the heavy bureaucracy. The PTAs explained that they are also trying to keep the teachers at the schools by providing free accommodation and collect small amounts of money for them. One of the PTAs also told that they would make soap for the teachers as they had just learned how to do that at a NRC PTA workshop. Besides this all of the interviewed PTAs regarded the ALP teachers as a contribution to the communities, but especially they emphasised that the building of the schools in areas where there were no schools before ALP was a great contribution.

The two interviewed head teachers shared the opinions of the PTAs regarding the main cause of the problematic teacher situation, and they explained that they have taken similar initiatives to keep the teachers at the schools. They also emphasised that the building of schools has been a great contribution to the communities.

All of the interviewed NRC supervisors agreed that there is a great lack of teachers in Liberia in general and that one of the main reasons for the problematic situation of the ALP teachers is the heavy bureaucracy to get on payroll. One of them explained that it is not only the ALP teachers who have difficulties in getting on the payroll. Before the war all the newly educated teachers were put on the payroll upon graduation but now they have to find job themselves. In spite of none of the ALP teachers have been paid since NRC phased out some of the NRC supervisors explained that many of the ALP teachers are still teaching in the districts and are waiting to see if the situation will improve. They explained that those who stay are usually from the area. They also stated that a lot of the teachers have left because they could not wait to see if they would ever get on payroll. Some of these teachers have been employed at private schools in the rubber plantation in the area.

To sum up there seems to be an overall trend which indicates that the methodology of ALP is perceived to be the same as used in the conventional school due to the reopened TTIs. In relation to capacity development this suggests that the ALP NRC might have a potential to develop capacity relevant for the curriculum reform process. With regards to the payroll situation the general trend seems to suggest that there is a problematic issue in relation to the

sustainability perspective because it is difficult to keep the teachers in the counties due to lack of being on the payroll.

6.3 Community mobilisation

One of the main objectives of the community mobilising component of the NRC ALP has been to raise awareness of the importance of education. The responses from the interviewees are therefore concerning the role of ALP in changing the attitudes towards education. The other main objective of the component was to establish and strengthen PTAs. The NRC ALP has primarily concerned the communities and the DEO level of the education sector. Therefore reflections and responses are mainly expressed from the level of the DEOs, the PTAs themselves and the head teachers. The NRC supervisors had not been working with the PTAs directly as this has been the responsibility of the community mobilisers but they had a good sense of the process and were hence as well reflecting upon the component. The responses from the interviewees divided into three categories. The first one is concerning the change of attitude towards education. The second the difference from before and after the PTA component was introduced and the majority expressed that the PTAs have been strengthened. The third category concerns the role and responsibilities of the PTAs, the current practices of PTAs as well as their potential roles and responsibilities.

6.3.1 Change of attitude towards education

In the ministry it was expressed by all of the interviewed staff that ALP has played a significant role in an attitude change especially regarding girls' education. Also the target group of ALP was mentioned and stressed as an important factor in increasing the trust in a better future for those who otherwise would not have had any prospects of education. Two of the staff emphasised that ALP has played a great role in behaviour change after the war. It was also explained that ALP has been helpful to the Liberian society and that since ALP was introduced there has been great progress. It was nevertheless also stressed by one of the ALP Unit staff that the change in attitude should also be seen in the light of a general awareness raising and the EFA: "*What happens is that awareness raising, sensitisation, EFA and so has been going on and therefore most people want education now"* (INT1/MOE/18.10.10).

One of the DEOs emphasised that parents have changed their attitude towards education due to ALP and that more parents prefer ALP because of the good results and the short time it takes to complete. One of the DEOs also stated that: "*Before the education system was low and ALP has helped taking some steps up and it has helped creating enthusiasm for school*

among children" (INT2/DEO/13.10.10). Another DEO described that ALP has been a breakthrough after the war. All of the interviewed DEOs mentioned the role that ALP has played in making it possible for young mothers to go to school. It is explained by several of the DEOs that the change is that in ALP the young mothers are allowed to come to school and because the ALP is in the afternoon it is more likely that someone from the family is home to watch the baby. One DEO was also stressing that ALP in general has improved the possibilities of the girls' to get an education. Another area which was emphasised is the change of approach to child labour. The majority of the DEOs explained that ALP has helped the children to stop working for example with the fishing boats. One is though emphasising, that because there is no high school in the area the children now start working when they graduate from primary rather than continue their education. Another one explained that before the children did not come to school because they had to go to the market but because the ALP is in the afternoon they manage both. One DEO had a different point of view and explained that there is no problems with child labour in the district because it has been sensitised.

One of the PTAs was commenting on the general change in attitude to education and explained that: "*Before there was no tradition for education – everybody was working in the farm and only if a missionary came and asked for a child they would send it to school"* (INT2/PTA/13.10.10). The same PTA stressed that there has been an attitude change among the parents because they did not know the importance of education before. In relation to child labour one of the PTA stated that because they have talked to the parents there is no longer a problem with children working rather than going to school.

One of the head teachers emphasised that ALP has played a significant role in changing the mindset of people and that ALP has increased the general encouragement to go to school among both children and adults. In relation to girls' education one of the head teachers explained that now they inform the girls about the clinics and that there is a decrease in early pregnancies. He also emphasised that young mothers have a right to education. Besides this he stressed that many of the girls have been through the ALP and are now in high school.

The NRC supervisors agreed that ALP has played a role in changing the attitude towards education. One of the groups of NRC supervisors explained that ALP has made the difference that now people want to go to school which was not the case before: *People that went to school at that time were suffering. People didn't want to send their child. Some didn't want to send their legitimate child so they send an adopted* (INT4/NRC/22.10.10). Another

NRC staff explained the role of NRC and how ALP has played a part in changing the atmosphere:

> *"We can see that the atmosphere has changed the parents have become involved they are sending their children to school now. And the teachers also are now in full gear to teach. And as we used to say these children are not NRC children they are our own Liberian children so NRC are just buttressing our government effort when it comes to education so we should see to it that we will help our children no matter what happen so now you can see everybody in full stream trying to improve the educational system*" (INT3/NRC/22.10.10).

6.3.2 Stronger PTAs

One of the CEOs mentioned that the PTAs have become stronger with the ALP and that they are playing a great role in maintaining and improving the schools in the absence of the government.

Most of the DEOs also expressed that ALP has strengthened the PTAs especially because they now know what their function is in relation to the school and the local community. One of them stated that before they were just concerned with food and how they could benefit from being a member of the PTA. Some of the other DEOs pointed to how the PTAs have strengthened girls' education and how the PTAs make the teachers come to school because they are watching.

The PTAs themselves also expressed that they feel they have become stronger since the ALP started. Especially it was expressed that they have become better to organise themselves and facilitate fruitful meetings and keep proper records of the work they do. Furthermore all of the PTAs emphasised that they now know the importance of being self sufficient and they have gained skills in relation to earn money through gardening and soap making. Besides this one PTA expressed that they have learned about how to settle a conflict and how to help the voluntary teachers.

Both of the head teachers interviewed were stressing that the ALP has strengthened the PTAs but nevertheless one of the head teachers also expressed that the PTA has never come to monitor even though they have been invited. On the positive side, he further stated, there have not been any problems with children working instead of going to school since the PTA has talked to the parents.

All of the NRC staff agreed that the PTAs have been strengthened and now they know their role and responsibilities. One of the groups of NRC supervisors explained that before the parents thought the school was the responsibility of the government so they did not care about maintaining the school or checking up on whether the teachers were actually there. Now the parents' and the PTAs' ownership of the school have increased. Another one expressed that: "*...it takes time to get used to something you have been doing for years to do it in a different way. We can give them some credit they are making some effort"* (INT3/NRC/22.10.10).

6.3.3 Roles & responsibilities of the PTA

The DEOs agreed that the PTAs should be seen as a resource and that they have a core role to play. One DEO elaborated further by emphasising how the PTAs can be used to brainstorm and find new solutions. Another DEO explained how a PTA has started looking for teachers themselves and another one pointed to the importance of the PTA in the communication between the DEO and the community.

The PTAs explained that they are working closely with the head teachers and play a role in discussing new initiatives and issues inside the school. One of the PTAs also told that they have had meetings about how to make the children be on time and they work on how to target parents in order to make them send their children to school. Another PTA stressed that they told the parents about not abusing their children and about not sending them out to sell instead of going to school. This PTA also told about their current initiative where they have a girls' club in the afternoon. Apart from this all of the PTAs were planning to make school gardens in the near future.

The head teachers expressed that they see the role of the PTA as one that mobilises the children to come to school and make sure that they are not running around the village or are working instead. Also the PTA should monitor the teachers and check up on whether the teacher is on time and are actually teaching. Finally the PTA can help generate income to the school through gardening or small scale production.

One of the groups of NRC supervisors expressed that the PTAs can monitor whether the teachers are there but because most of them are illiterate they cannot check up on whether the teachers are doing things right. It was also expressed by several of the groups that the PTA has a great potential to influence the attitude towards education and that the PTAs has played

a big role in sensitising the parents to the importance of schooling. Several of the groups told that a PTA has collected money for a teacher that was not on payroll.

To sum up it seems that the ALP has an influence on the importance of primary education for children. In relation to capacity development this suggests a certain positive outcome in the perspective of capacity development as a process of change. The change of attitude should also be seen in relation to the global trends of EFA and hence the global/local dynamics become central. With regards to the PTAs the overall trend suggests that the establishment and training of the PTAs have increased the engagement of the local communities in the school governance which points at capacity development at an organisational level important for the PTA reform.

6.4 Support to administration and management

The support to administration and management that NRC has been giving during the years of the programme and during the phase out of the ALP has been targeted towards the CEOs and DEOs. Therefore it has mainly been these two groups who have been expressing reflections and thoughts about the impact of the support. It was nevertheless also interesting to get the perspective of the staff in the Ministry of Education as this would show whether the support might have had a broader effect. The responses from the interviewees fell into two main categories. The first concerns the cooperation between the EOs and the NRC supervisors during the phase out period and the practical changes in the routines inspired by the NRC supervisors. Within this category the division of labour between the EOs and the seconded NRC supervisors is central. The second category is slightly different in scope as it concerns challenges regarding the vertical accountability in terms of being able to supervise the 'next' level' in the education sector. In relation to this the question of decentralisation was touched upon as a possible approach to the challenges.

6.4.1 The EO/NRC supervisor cooperation

In the ministry none of the staff in the ALP Unit had noticed any improvement in the administrative or organisational skills of the DEOs and CEOs and they emphasised that even though the CEOs are supposed to hand in an annual report they do not do it. Also they had not seen any track of the statistical material collected by the DEOs and CEOs[30]. One of the staff

[30] There is a department for statistics in the ministry and from a visit there with a NRC staff it was clear that they knew about collected statistics from the three 'NRC' counties. It was nevertheless not possible to set up an interview with the staff from that department.

in the ALP Unit stated that all CEOs are the same and he could not see any difference in those from the counties where NRC had been working. The other interviewed staff from the ALP Unit stated that: "*CEOs and DEOs are the most irregular people when it comes to the ALP"* (INT3/MOE/18.10.10). In the interview with the staff from the teacher training department the topic was not touched upon.

The CEOs were emphasising the data collection and statistics as important areas where they have used the NRC supervisor. One of the CEO clarified it further and explained that the NRC supervisor: "*should teach the office in how to collect statistics and they can discuss how to make reports and so"* (INT2/CEO/01.1010). The CEOs explained that the NRC supervisor is also assisting with material distribution and has been supporting the coordination of monthly meetings between the actors involved in educational development in the county. In relation to whether practical changes has happened the CEOs expressed quite a different opinion from the MOE as they stated that practical changes had occurred. One explained that they now have more reliable statistics which for instance can be used by Word Food Program. And one stressed that he combined the M&E practices from the ministry with those from NRC so they complement each other in the best possible way.

All of the DEOs expressed that it has been beneficial to have the NRC supervisor connected to the office. One of the job tasks for the DEOs is to supervise the schools in their district. Most of the DEOs expressed that they have divided the schools to supervise between the NRC supervisor and themselves in order to cover all schools within a reasonable timeframe. One DEO explained that she does not have a motorbike and therefore the NRC supervisor is doing all of the supervision for her. Another of the DEO emphasised that he has been using the NRC supervisor as his eyes and ears in the areas where he could not go himself and several of the DEOs explained that the NRC supervisor has helped with collecting data for statistics. Several of the DEOs also stressed that that they had developed data collecting forms in cooperation with the NRC supervisor.

The DEOs expressed agreement about practical changes as a result of the close cooperation with the NRC supervisors in the phasing out period. One of the DEOs explained that he is trying to incorporate the best from the two very different kinds of tests which is used in the conventional school and the ALP respectively. Another DEO explained that he has improved the M&E based on ALP and a third one explained that the NRC supervisor has introduced a work plan for her where she writes every day and keep the notes for the monthly

reporting to the CEO. Yet another of the DEOs told that he has started dividing the district into sections when supervising based on the idea from the NRC supervisor. Besides this it was expressed by several of the DEOs that they have gained a new understanding of their role as administrators. It was especially stressed that they now know the importance of sharing knowledge and seek advice among different stakeholders before making important decisions. Also issues as good feed back practice, punctuality and cooperation was emphasised as areas where they felt they had learned new practices from the NRC supervisors. One of the DEOs stressed that she would practice the administrative things like record keeping she had learned from the NRC workshops because she had noticed that it was helping her to work better. Another one stressed that he had learned to take responsibility and do the job himself rather than waiting for others ones to do it.

In general all of the interviewed NRC supervisors agreed that the DEOs and CEOs have learned a lot from the workshops and from the tandem system where one NRC staff has been working closely with one of the EOs. They pointed at especially the monitoring system as an area where the EOs had learned something. They also emphasised feed back practices as an area where they experienced that the EOs had improved and they expressed that the EOs seems happy with the registration forms. One of the changes which was emphasised by several of the NRC supervisors was that because the EOs goes supervising the teachers are a little afraid and are making sure to be in the classrooms. They explained that this is a difference from before ALP because the EOs never came to the schools and therefore no one ever checked whether the teachers where in the schools which meant that the teachers would not be regular. They stressed that even if the EOs do not manage to go everywhere it has an impact because the word goes that the EO is supervising. Also they stressed that the EOs are now better at documenting and filing information and one of the groups expressed that the EOs have learned to include important stakeholders in decision-making.

Some of the NRC supervisors expressed their own role as being an inspiration for the EOs by having good practices that the EOs would then want to copy and several of them stated that the EOs still depend on the NRC supervisors. One of the NRC supervisors expressed their role as this: "*It is not a degree we are giving them* [the DEOs] *it is a matter of making them think – it is a matter of thinking!"* (INT4/NRC/22.10.10). Some of the NRC supervisors also expressed that there is still challenges and one of them is that the EOs are

difficult to get involved and get hold on because they are all the time in Monrovia. They also had the impression that the EOs had difficulties with the monitoring system.

6.4.2 Vertical accountability in the education sector

The four officials in the ALP Unit are supposed to visit the counties regularly to check up on their work but the interviewed staff from the ALP Unit explained that they do not have fuel or cars and are therefore not able to move outside of Monrovia. Fuel and mobility was mentioned as the biggest obstacles to improve the vertical accountability in the education sector. One of them expressed that because he could not come out and check up on the CEOs they are cheating as much as they can and are not reliable.

The CEOs shared this opinion as mobility is limited because they do not have petrol and hence the limited mobility is also their main obstacle to carry out the supervision of the DEOs as they are supposed to. They expressed that fuel is a great problem for the monitoring and that hinders the CEOs in supervising and checking up on the DEOs and their work. One also mentioned the poor road condition and explained that when it rains too much the DEOs can not get out into the bush and do their supervision.

The DEOs were also emphasising mobility as the single most important challenge. They stated that the constrained mobility due to lack of fuel and vehicles makes the supervision of the teachers extremely difficult. It also affects the communication and administrative paths which according to them means that the administrative procedures become long and slow especially in relation to the CEOs.

Regarding decentralisation as a way to meet the challenges which the limited mobility comprises and to ease the rather slow administrative procedures both of the staff from the ALP Unit agreed that decentralisation would benefit the counties because they would have a say in relation to budget, program decisions, proposals and so on. In this way the CEOs would not have to go to Monrovia all the time. Furthermore, one stated, it would be a good lesson for the CEOs to have more responsibility. In spite of the positive approach to decentralisation expressed by both of the ALP Unit staff it did not seem to be a process they were a part of promoting as one of them expressed: *"That's a very good idea but I don't know how far they have come with this decentralisation"* (INT 3/MOE/18.10.10).

One of the CEOs expressed that the education sector would be much more effective if the administration was decentralised because it would be possible to work closer with the

stakeholders and make decisions about salary at the county level and avoid the problematic travel to Monrovia all the time.

The NRC staff in general expressed that monitoring and supervision between the levels within the education sector is one of the main challenges regarding the vertical accountability. They agreed that the current monitoring between the levels is really poor and for instance the CEOs do not pay much attention to the DEOs because the CEOs are in Monrovia all the time.

To sum up the overall trend with regards to the training of EOs seems to suggest a positive result. In terms of capacity development the division of labour between the EOs and NRC supervisors is nevertheless a problematic issue in relation to the decentralisation process. In relation to the vertical accountability the constraints on transportation seems to be the overall challenge for the sustainability perspective of the further supervision.

The NRC ALP has the potential to feed into the overall Education Sector Plan (ESP) in three reform areas concerning UPE, Teacher training and Improved management and administration at the county and district levels. The question is whether this has happened. The argument is that, if the NRC ALP is developing capacity which strengthens the three above stated areas of the ESP then it may have contributed positively to the sustainable development of the education sector. In the following three chapters the purpose is to analyse what potentials the NRC ALP has to develop capacity relevant for the three perform processes and whether the NRC ALP is actually developing this capacity. The three analyses take a departure point in the capacity development framework deduced from the literature and are comparing components of the NRC ALP with the experience of the involved actors and the overall education plans and policies in order to analyse if the components have lead to capacity development relevant for the three reform processes. The capacity development framework will be used to identify the potentials of the NRC ALP to develop capacity (table 2.1), and to analyse whether it is happening (table 2.2). Finally the findings will be discussed in a sustainability perspective. The structure of the analyses follows the structure from the presentation of the findings and is divided into Community mobilisation, Teachers & Teacher training and Support to Administration & Management.

7 Engaging local communities

In the ESP it is stated that the aim is: "*To ensure that all school age children and others so desiring, receive and complete primary education of a quality that adequately prepares them for the next stage/phase of living and learning."* (GoL, 2009 p. 56). The goal is to reach Universal Primary Education (UPE). The NRC ALP is aiming at contributing to this goal by providing education for a group of marginalised children. As means to enrol and keep students in the ALP classes the NRC ALP has made a community mobilisation initiative. This consists of recruitment and training of community mobilisers and establishment of PTAs in the communities where NRC has been operating ALP. Engagement of the civil society is in general believed to be important in the reconstruction of the nation state (Burde, 2004). PTAs are seen as a good way to initiate this engagement because parents often care about their children's future possibilities and therefore they are likely to be willing to engage in the school (Burde, 2004).

Regarding the NRC ALP community mobilisation component in relation to the here stated ESP goal two issues are central. The first issue relates to whether the NRC ALP community mobilisation component is leading to an increased awareness of the positive aspects of education. This issue feeds into the general appraisal for ALP which the interviewees expressed. The second issue should be seen in continuation of the first and concerns the capabilities of the PTAs and whether they can manage their roles. The aim is to analyse whether the NRC ALP community mobilisation component is implemented in line with the capacity development criteria for the donor intervention and whether this is leading to development of capacity relevant for the UPE reform process. The two issues will be analysed together as they are interlinked and where appropriate world culture theory will be used supplementary to explain certain findings. Following this analysis the findings will be discussed in the perspective of sustainability.

7.1 The NRC component on Community mobilisation

The NRC ALP community mobilisation component is sharing some of the criteria outlined for the donor intervention in relation to capacity development (Table 2.1). In terms of feeding into overall strategies the NRC ALP community mobilisation component is feeding into the Education Law of 2002 which requires establishment of PTAs at each school (GoL, 2009). This has become a MOE priority since 2006 and was included in the NRC ALP in

2009. Since then PTAs have been trained in their roles and responsibilities. The NRC initiated the first part of the community mobilising component in 2007 which included training of community mobilisers in the communities where NRC ALP schools were established (Nkutu, et al., 2010). In the ESP it is stated that the aim is to strengthening the PTAs and School Management Committees (SMC) to improve school-level management and the collaboration between school, district and county level management (GoL, 2009). Within this frame the roles and responsibilities of the PTAs have been outlined in the ALP guidelines (See Box 7.1). The NRC ALP community mobilisation component is feeding into the purpose of the PTAs and is to some extent also feeding into the outlined guidelines (See box 7.2). Regarding a realistic timeframe the NRC ALP community mobilisation component has been criticised for initiating the component too late in the programme (Nkutu, et al., 2010). This has been argued to have negative consequences for the continuous engagement of the community as the newly established structures might not be grounded when the NRC is phasing out (Nkutu, et al., 2010). In terms of cooperating with other implementing partners this has not been documented in relation to the community mobilisation component. As a part of the phase out strategy a local NGO has nevertheless taken over the training of the PTAs and community mobilisers. The NRC ALP community mobilising component is context specific in the sense that the: "*prolonged conflict, the lack of facilities and the socio-cultural practices in many of the return areas, have affected health and education outcomes, as well as the respect for women's rights"* (Nkutu, et al., 2010 p. 33). The component is taking these factors into account in the establishment of the PTAs and the conducted training.

Box 7.1 ALP Guidelines for PTAs

Volunteer labour force in construction of classrooms, offices, toilets and store rooms

Be present during distribution of school materials/supply by MOE to ensure transparency and accountability

Ensure the proper distribution of WFP provided food rations to ALP school students

Maintain close relationship among learners and their teachers

Ensure security for students and school property

Source: (MOE, 2008)

Box 7.2 NRC Guidelines for PTAs and community mobilisers

Training on PTA governance, school maintenance, project planning and fundraising

Mobilisation of communities to send their children to school, construction of schools, maintenance of school buildings

Sensitisation of communities on child protection, health/hygiene and women's rights

Community awareness sessions held weekly and at community gatherings

Source: (MoE, 2008)

Based on this outline it seems reasonable to conclude that the NRC ALP community mobilising component is to some extent consistent with two of the criteria outlined for the donor capacity development intervention namely, in terms of feeding into overall strategies and being context specific. The component is nevertheless not corresponding to the criteria in terms of a realistic timeframe and cooperation. In the following it will be analysed whether the component in spite of the limited correspondence is developing capacity relevant for the UPE reform. The analysis will take its departure point in the characteristics of capacity development in fragile situations as outlined in table 2.2. The issue of whether the NRC ALP component on community mobilisation is restoring the state function and legitimacy will not be touched upon in the analysis. Community mobilisation and particularly the establishment of the PTAs should be understood as a way to create the non-political organisations which are vital for democracy (Putnam, 1994). This perspective is nevertheless beyond the scope of this study.

7.2 Process of change

From the literature on capacity development in fragile situations it became clear that capacity development should be a process of change in order to unlearn previous behaviour which has contributed to the deterioration of the state and society (Davies, 2009). In Liberia the increased awareness and access to education which has happened since the war ended is a major process of change. As highlighted earlier education is political and has in Liberia been a privilege of the few. This has contributed to a differentiated society which consequently has caused revolt and instability. Increasing access to education is therefore an important stepping stone to overcome the inequality of the past. From the interviews (c.f. chapter 6.3.1) it became clear that the attitude to education has changed dramatically. One of the reasons for this change is the presence of the many international organisations. These organisations are building schools, training teachers and provide education for a great number of children. By doing this the awareness, with regards to education, is raised. The international organisations are working in line with international agreements like EFA and MDG and as Liberia is adhering to these they play a significant role in the changing attitude towards education. The reference to the EFA was also stated by one of the EOs in the ALP Unit which indicates that the EFA is articulated as central for the overall national education reform. Within this increased awareness of education ALP plays an important role due to its target group. It was emphasised strongly by all interviewees that ALP in general is important because it provides educational opportunities for a group of children and young people who otherwise would not

have had the possibility of getting an education. In line with these statements NRC ALP was also given credit for contributing to the change of attitude towards education by making education accessible through the building of schools but also because they allow for instance young mothers into their classes.

The process of change which the increased awareness of the importance of education has caused is a great example of how the world culture is affecting the national development. Because the international organisations are basing their programmes on the world models they carry a certain discourse with them – here the idea that education is the key to development – when they are implementing programmes in Liberia. By doing this the world model on education is being reinforced as it becomes normative for the approach to education in the receiver country and hence the discourse of the world model is re-articulated as the truth. NRC has education as one of their core activities but they also have more 'traditional' humanitarian activities as Camp management, Shelter and Emergency, Food security and distribution (NRC). NRC has included education in their emergency and post-conflict activities and this reflects a comparatively resent development within the world model on education and fragile situations. Previously education has not been seen as a life-saving activity and hence there has in general been a resistance to include education in the emergency response[31] (INEE, 2011a). Two factors can be seen as important contributors to the change of the world model on education in emergencies and hence the practices of implementing partners in Liberia. On the one hand the INEE has spent a lot of energy advocating for the importance of education in emergencies and national disasters. The network is based on the membership of various groups within the development architecture including NGOs, UN agencies, donor agencies, governments, academia and representatives from the affected countries (INEE, 2011a). The broad foundation of INEE is its strengths because the message is thus spread across the whole spectrum of actors. On the other hand the increased security agenda within the Western countries is playing a central role in shaping the global discourse. This is among others expressed through the chosen topic of central reports as the World Development Report from the World Bank which this year has the theme: *Conflict, Security and Development* (WB, 2011) and the UNESCO developed EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011 with the theme: *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and*

[31] Emergency response is here defined on the basis of the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for Disaster Response ("Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response," 2004)

Education (UNESCO, 2011). Within the increased focus on security it is argued that development in the affected countries will minimise the fragility and stabilise the countries (WB, 2011). Education is therefore gaining a central role due to the key role it is believed to play in this process. Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008) argue that:

> *"Since 1990 the purpose and goals of education in sub-Saharan Africa have been reshaped by four interconnected developments: globalisation, the changed focus in the aid agencies towards development assistance, the adaptation of the sub-Saharan African countries to the new world order with its new political emphases, and a spilling over of new pedagogical ideals from Europe and USA into sub-Saharan Africa. The latter resulted from development export on the part of the Western world, development import from sub-Saharan African countries, as well as increased international communications"* (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008 p. 198).

The recently changed focus of the aid agencies in relation to education in emergencies and post-conflict is hence an important factor for the widespread acceptance and the subsequent demand for education which Liberia has experienced after the war. It furthermore clearly exemplifies how the world models are shaped by rationalised others and implemented in periphery countries without regards to its origin. The NRC ALP is just a little part of this whole change but it is nevertheless feeding into the process.

Based on the above it seems reasonable to conclude that the NRC ALP has fed into a process of change in relation to the approach to education. In this light the programme can be seen as capacity development because it is strengthening a change of structures which previously has been a root cause of the conflict. The NRC ALP community mobilising component is playing a central role in this process because it has targeted the very local level through the parents and the communities. In the following the focus will be on the PTAs as these are at the core of component. The PTAs are covering the ALP schools as well as the formal school which means that in each community there is one PTA (it is uncertain though if mission schools or dislike have their own PTAs). This is important for the sustainability dimension as the PTAs are supposed to continue after the NRC phase-out and the ALP schools are turned over to the government.

7.3 Endogenous demand

The NRC ALP community mobilisation component can be seen as a response to an endogenous demand in the sense that the Education Law of 2002 states that all schools should

have PTAs. This has not been effectuated but the MOE is reinforcing the importance of the PTAs in the ESP (GoL, 2009). This means that the component is feeding into the overall strategies and supports the demand for PTAs. As mentioned earlier the establishment of PTAs has become a best practice among the international organisations due to the positive outcome they are expected to have on the engagement of the civil society (Burde, 2004). In order to get the children into the schools, and even more important make them stay there, it is believed to be important to involve the parents and the local community in general. This focus on the importance of engaging the parents and the local communities in order to reach the educational targets means that PTAs are expected to fulfil two roles:

> *"They are expected to fulfil the purpose they were created to serve (improve local schools) and simultaneously provide a vehicle to produce add-on benefits that may relate to larger issues affecting education. As the association functions, it creates two by-products. One is the organization itself, which can serve as a vehicle for other purposes in addition to what it originally was intended to do, and the other is the benefits of the public good that the PTA creates (i.e., improvements in school working hours, or in curriculum)"* (Coleman in Burde, 2004).

This means that the PTAs are supposed to fulfil a practical role in terms of improving the school in various ways including awareness raising in the local community with regards to the importance of education, health issue and so forth. At the same time they are supposed to manage the organisation *PTA* as well. This requires training in PTA management and administration. The NRC ALP community mobilisation component is responding to these requirements by training the PTAs in practical and technical topics which can be used to maintain the school and create awareness in relation to education, health, women's rights etc. At the same time the component included training in the role of the PTA and how to manage and administer the PTA. From the interviews it was expressed by several of the actors, including the PTAs themselves, that a major difference from before the component was included was that the PTA members now understand their role and hence are more engaged and therefore more active. Before the training the PTAs which existed were more occupied with what they would gain from attending the PTA rather than how they could contribute to the development of the school (INT5/DEO/12.10.10). From the interviews it was expressed that the training is perceived to have lead to an increased efficiency of the PTAs (c.f. chapter 6.3.2). These responses suggest that the NRC ALP community mobilisation component has contributed with capacity development of the PTAs by responding to an endogenous demand.

Both of the purposes, which the PTAs are supposed to fulfil, have been targeted through the component.

In spite of the positive statements with regards to the improved efficiency and outcome of the PTA training it is stated in the final evaluation of the NRC ALP that it is difficult to measure whether the PTAs have improved in practice. Another critic in the evaluation is the insufficient timeframe. With regards to the sustainability of the initiated changes which the trainings might have contributed with Dana Burde (2004) is arguing that in practice the local involvement which the implementing partner is aiming at increasing is very often not surviving when the programme phases out. This is due to a lack of structural connection between the PTAs and the national political power which means that when the implementing partners pull out the parents lack: "*a mechanism through which they might advocate for the education of their children"* (Burde, 2004 p. 185). This happens because the implementing partners neglect to take into consideration that without national participation the parental involvement will not increase the civic engagement. In many cases this neglect occurs because the implementing partners have to cater to donors and other interested parties in order to realise their programmes and hence it becomes the short-term service delivery goals rather than the long-term capacity development goals which are in focus (Burde, 2004).

Based on this it seems reasonable to conclude that the NRC ALP community mobilisation component is responding to an endogenous demand and hence are in line with the characteristics of capacity development in fragile situations. By establishing the PTAs the NRC ALP contributed to the UPE reform process as the government apparently has not had the capacity to train and establish PTAs at all schools in spite of it being a national law since 2002. It is nevertheless questionable whether the PTAs are capable of fully explore the part of their purpose which relate to the organisation itself. Ideally the NRC ALP community mobilisation component should have included making a link to the national level in order for the PTAs to become the mechanism of engaging civil society as the intention was from the onset. The issue of levels will be analysed in the following section where it becomes clear that the NRC ALP community mobilisation component may be able to target the individual, organisational and institutional level at a small scale but still neglect the broader perspective.

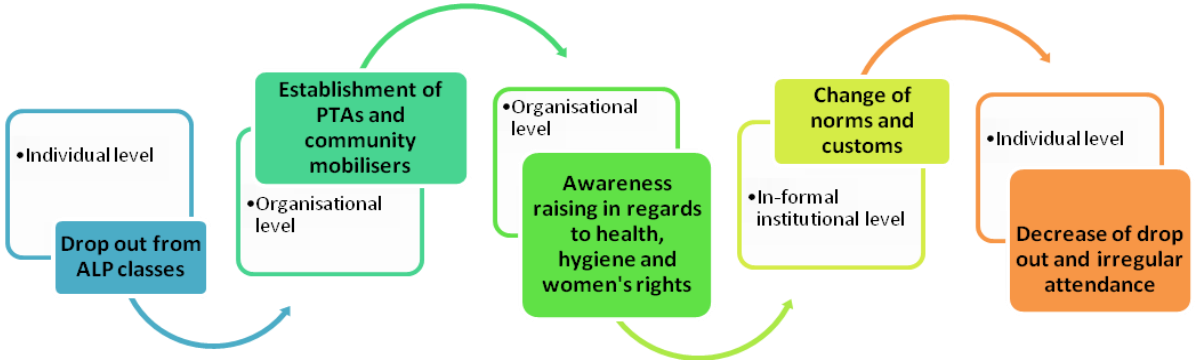
7.4 Process between levels

From the literature on capacity development one of the imperatives highlighted was to see capacity development as a process between levels of society because the actions of the

individual, organisational and institutional levels are all determined by each other. The NRC ALP community mobilisation component shows a very fine example of how this can be done in a small scale.

Before 2007 the NRC ALP suffered from irregular school attendance and high drop-out rates. This was caused by various reasons for instance early marriage, cultural rites, illness and the need of family labour (Nkutu, et al., 2010). Due to this the NRC introduced the community mobilisation component. At first with the training of a community mobiliser and then later on with the training and establishment of PTAs (Nkutu, et al., 2010). The individual level in this regard concerns the students in the ALP classes who for different reasons had to drop out of the school. In order to target the problematic situation at the individual level initiatives were taken at the organisational level. The organisational level should here be understood as the ALP school. In addition to the physical school building and the teachers the ALP schools were expanded with a community mobiliser and later on the PTA. These additional functions of the ALP school meant that on the one hand awareness was raised with regards to the issues which in the first place caused the students to drop out. This covered for instance awareness raising on topics as health and hygiene, women's rights and child protection – including the right to education. On the other hand the establishment of the PTAs increased the involvement of the parents in the community. The statements from interviewed PTAs and head teachers confirm that the PTAs play a central role in motivating the parents to send their children to school and the PTA members do also play a role in making sure children are not running around in the village during school hours. Through the awareness raising and the involvement of the parents the informal institutional level was affected as the norms and customs regarding the issues which kept the students away from school or made them drop out were changed. These changed attitudes lead to a change of habits and practises in relation to among other things hygiene and sanitation as well as women's rights and hence some of the reasons for the ALP students to drop-out were reduced (Nkutu, et al., 2010). As a result of this a decrease in drop-out rates and irregular attendance among the ALP students occurred (Nkutu, et al., 2010). Figure 7.1 shows the interaction between the societal levels in a schematic form.

Figure 7.1 Interactions between societal levels



Bases on this it seems reasonable to conclude that the NRC ALP community mobilisation component has managed to target the three societal levels in a small scale. There are nevertheless two obstacles with regards to the sustainability which influences the outcome in terms of capacity development. The first concerns the timeframe and the second concerns the involvement of the MOE. The timeframe of the programme is playing a central role in terms of the sustainability perspective of the intervention. It can be argued that the NRC has not taken the context sufficiently into account when they only spend one year on the establishment of the PTAs before they are phasing out. The structures of the PTAs are new and different and it takes time for these new structures to be well enough grounded to continue without the continuous support and motivation by the NRC. In spite of the component taking the three levels into account in the community it is not taking the levels into account in an overall national perspective. This means that the MOE has not been involved which means that the PTAs will not receive any support in the future. This is problematic in terms of getting the structures fully grounded. A local NGO has been engaged to take over the training of the PTAs as a phase out strategy but at the time the fieldwork was conducted the future economic perspectives of the local NGO were rather uncertain which might indicate that the future follow up might not be consistent. Concluding the NRC ALP community mobilisation component is corresponding to the characteristics of the capacity

development in fragile situations in terms of targeting several of the societal levels but only on a small scale.

7.5 Summing up from the perspective of sustainability

To sum up on the capacity developed through the NRC ALP community mobilising component it can be concluded that it has severe consequences for the outcome of the component that it has an unrealistic timeframe. This issue turned out to be fundamental with regards to whether the characteristics of capacity development in fragile situations in practice are met. Even though the component is responding to an endogenous demand and has the potential to strengthen the civil society it is likely to be hampered by the lack of time to make the structures grounded. This situation might also reflect the challenge it is to change societal structures and engage local community members on a long-term basis when the main objective of the implementing organisation is short-term and service-delivery oriented.

With regards to the general awareness raising in relation to reaching UPE the NRC ALP community mobilisation component is feeding into the world model on education as well as reinforcing it by carrying the discourse in their programming. By doing this the programme is contributing to the process of change and hence the overall national education reform. From a sustainability perspective this can be argued to be a positive process as the continuous articulation of the importance of education might increase the likelihood of government funding allocated to education as the demand is being constant.

In relation to the PTA reform, which the government has initiated with the Education Law of 2002 and followed up by the ESP, the NRC ALP component is strengthening the reform by establishing the PTAs as part of the ALP schools, because it is the same PTA which is covering both the ALP and formal primary school. Is seems reasonable to argue that the establishment of the PTAs is the first step in the reform process. The PTA members expressed that they have learned important things in relation to the technical topics as well as with regards to the management of the PTAs. This was supported by statements of other interviewed groups. It can nevertheless be argued that the capacity development is limited to the individual level in terms of the actual training of the PTA members. As long as the newly developed PTAs structures are not grounded this is a rather fragile capacity development in terms of sustainability. This is because the individual PTA members might decide to leave the PTA, move from the area, die or in other ways stop being a part of the PTA. If this happens

before the organisational and structural changes have been grounded the capacity developed in relation to the PTA might be decreasing.

8 Teachers & teacher training

In the ESP the goal regarding teachers is "*to provide the teachers for an expanding system in transition by providing competent, well-qualified and motivated teachers for all educational institutions"* (GoL, 2009 p. 131). The NRC ALP is, as outlined in chapter 5, aiming at contributing to the education sector by training new teachers in the accelerated learning methods as well as providing the opportunity for the ALP teachers to take the C-certificate and hence give them future prospects of becoming integrated into the conventional teacher staff when the NRC ALP is phasing out.

Regarding the here stated ESP goal two issues are central in relation to the NRC ALP teacher training component. The first is the qualification of the NRC ALP teachers. Are they qualified when they have been through the training provided by NRC? This issue feeds into the point raised by the interviewees regarding whether ALP methodology is deviating from the general teaching in the formal school. This issue will be analysed on the basis of capacity development theory. The aim is to analyse whether the NRC is implementing the ALP in line with the deduced criteria from the literature (table 2.1 and 2.2) and whether this is leading to development of capacity relevant for the reform of the teacher training. The second issue regards the provision of teachers. Is the NRC ALP contributing with teachers to the formal education system in Liberia? This issue is in line with the payroll problematic which the interviewees raised as another important point when talking about teachers and ALP. This issue is important for the perspective of sustainability in relation to the NRC ALP teacher training component as the NRC ALP teachers have to be integrated into the formal education sector in order for the component to contribute to sustainable development. This issue will be analysed taking into account the dynamics of the world culture.

8.1. Training qualified teachers

The NRC ALP teacher training component is meeting some of the criteria which are outlined for the donor intervention (table 2.1) in terms of creating a fundament for the programme to develop capacity. First and foremost the component is feeding into the overall strategy for teacher training. As described earlier the ALP guidelines prescribe ten days of training and a yearly refresher course. The NRC ALP is providing this training for their teachers. Besides feeding into the ALP guidelines the NRC ALP is also providing their teachers with the opportunity to take the C-certificate as an in-service course and is hence

following the national regulations for teacher qualifications. The latter is imperative for the perspective of sustainability. In terms of having a realistic timeframe the NRC ALP has been running for two cycles (2005-2010) which means that teachers who have been recruited in the beginning of the programme have had up till 5 years of regular supervision. This timeframe is enough to carry out the training of the teachers prescribed by the ALP guidelines but whether this is enough to produce qualified teachers can be questioned. The programme is being context-specific regarding teacher training by taking into account the existing regulations and guidelines in the country and by following up the training with additional supervision as the ALP methodology differs from the teacher-centred approach to teaching which has been prevailing in Liberia (c.f. chapter 5). Often teachers teach the way they have been taught themselves and if the training is relatively limited the likelihood of this tendency is increasing (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). Regarding the last criteria of the donor intervention there seems to have been limited cooperation between partners. The most obvious partner would be United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as they have implemented the LTTP, but cooperation in this regards has not been documented. In general the ALP Unit has previously coordinated a monthly meeting with all ALP implementing partners but this has been stopped since the phase out announcement of the MOE. On a county level coordination meetings are held by the CEOs for all partners implementing or funding educational programmes and activities. These meetings were nevertheless rather irregular and only in one of the visited counties did the meeting actually take place with the involved partners.

Based on this outline it seems fair to conclude that the NRC ALP, at least in principle, is consistent with several of the criteria of the donor intervention. In the following it will be analysed whether this leads to capacity development. The analysis is taking its departure point in the characteristics of capacity development in fragile situations (table 2.2).

8.1.1 Process of change

As outlined in the introduction of this study education reforms are a commonly used practice in the rebuilding of the state because of the role that education plays in shaping the future citizens (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Learner-centred pedagogy is seen as an important part of the reform of the education system because it is believed to develop the skills needed in a modern society (Leu in Altinyelken, 2010). The integration of learner-centred pedagogy into the formal education system can hence be seen as a process of change in terms of shaping the future citizens with skills needed to rebuild the country. The methods of ALP, which are in line with the learner-centred pedagogy, can be argued to feed into this process of change

because it falls within the national discourse on the appropriate and desired approach to teaching and learning. The outcome can thus be twofold. On the one hand the NRC ALP can reinforce the discourse on learner-centred pedagogy being the 'right' approach to education as the international organisations are playing a certain role in spreading messages like this (Meyer, et al., 1997). Ideally this would mean that the ALP is contributing to capacity development in terms of a change of approach to education which again ideally would affect the practice. On the other hand ALP could contribute with a much more direct form of capacity development if there turns out to be a spill over effect from the ALP teachers to teachers in the formal education system.

From the interviews the overall trend was that the method used in the ALP is perceived to be more or less similar to the one used in the formal education. In spite of different perceptions regarding the overall curriculum most interviewees agreed that the methodology is similar due to the requirements of the C-certificate and the reform of the TTIs. The EOs at the district level and the head teachers furthermore emphasised that the ALP teachers are more disciplined and use the lessons plans etc. This emphasis does not relate directly to the methods of ALP but indicates that the actions of the teacher in this regard are seen as important and indeed perceived to be deviating from the practice in the formal school. The clearest trend which seems to emerge from the data is that the formal school and ALP is perceived as separate schools but that the conventional school teachers can learn something from the ALP teachers especially because they have a regular attendance and know how to use the lesson plans etc. This seems to mean that there is a positive attitude to learn and share ideas with the ALP teachers because 'it is all the same'. Several of the head teachers and DEOs also stated that they have learned something from the ALP methods and knew about ALP teachers who have been teaching conventional teachers in ALP methods and practices. As no teaching was observed during the fieldwork it is not possible to say anything about the actual classroom practices. It was nevertheless stated in the evaluation of the national ALP from 2007 (Nicholson, 2007) that the teachers see the conventional school as separate from the ALP and are therefore not transferring good practices from one to the other.

It was expressed by the interviewees that the three reopened TTIs are given credit for the widespread use of learner-centred methods. It is nevertheless questionable how much impact the TTI realistically can have had as the TTIs only have been up and running for a short time and hence there is a natural limitation to how many teachers which have graduated

with the new C-certificate. As presented in chapter 5 the first cohort of 478 students was admitted to the TTIs in 2008. This number is below the total capacity of the three TTIs as the institutions have suffered from low enrolment rates. In 2010 admission to the TTIs was announced to be free. This announcement came as a reaction to the continuously low enrolment. This situation supports the assumption that the spread of the learner-centred methods is limited. The in-service training might play an important role in increasing the spread of the learner-centred pedagogy, because it means that it is not only the new teachers trained from the TTIs who are subject to the new learner-centred ideas. Statistics from 2009 show that at least 916 teachers have been enrolled in the in-service training. This number is higher than the number of students enrolling in the pre-service training and supports the argument that the in-service training is reaching a broader segment. In spite of the in-service training being more extensive than the ALP training it is still likely to face problems with the re-orientation of teachers' practice (Baxter & Bethke, 2009) (this issue will be further addressed in the section: *Process between levels of society*). Based on the figures of enrolment in the pre- and in-service training from the TTIs it seems reasonable to argue that the above statements from the interviewees which emphasised the role of the TTIs in relation to learner-centred pedagogy is a matter of articulation of the learner-centred discourse rather than a matter of practical spread and integration of the learner-centred pedagogy in the formal education system.

Based on these findings it seems reasonable to assume that the ALP is contributing to the process of change by reinforcing the discourse on learner-centred methods. This discourse has lead to a shift in approach to teaching and the relationship between the teacher and the learner. Whether the discourse has lead to a change of practice and behaviour in the classrooms is not possible to conclude within the scope of this study but due to the currently limited range of the TTI it seems questionable. In terms of a practical spill over effect of learner-centred methods from ALP to the conventional school it seems like the conventional teachers find the ALP interesting and can learn from the ALP teachers, but in practice the spill over effect nevertheless seems to be limited. It can then be concluded that the ALP teacher training component seems to contribute to a change of articulation of the approach to teaching and learning rather than the actual practise.

8.1.2 Process between levels of society

In terms of the ALP teacher training there seems to be no doubt that at the individual level the teachers trained by NRC have gained new skills in relation to teaching methods and

practices. As stated above it was also highlighted by several of the interviewees that the ALP teachers are perceived to be good and predictable teachers as they are on time and are using the tools about which they have learned e.g. the lesson plans.

In terms of taking the organisational level into account the NRC ALP component of teacher training should ideally increase the level of the human resources in the education sector by contributing with additional teachers to the much needing education system. In this regard the component is offering the ALP teachers the possibility of taking the C-certificate. It is nevertheless only 84 out of the 249 teachers who have taken the C-certificate and hence can be taken into account in this regard. The question of whether these 84 teachers are seen as a contribution to the education system will be treated in the following discussion on sustainability. Important for the here raised issue of quality of teachers and teacher training is the fact that the ALP training of the teachers is so limited. In a study based on analysis of several ALPs Baxter and Bethke (2009) argue that it is unreasonable to assume that even experienced teachers will be able to teach using learner-centred methods based on ten days of intensive training. They argue that the reason for this is that rote learning is usually deeply embedded in the teachers due to the own previous experiences:

> *"Even where teachers are trained and qualified, 10 to 12 days of even the most effective training is not likely to overcome the habits and coping strategies of long-time teachers or those who have experienced a traditional 'chalk and talk' education themselves (and who teach as they were taught). In most emergency-affected developing countries the usual teaching style is based on rote learning and is very teacher-centred and didactic. Expecting teachers to re-orient their teaching styles based on a few days of training is not realistic"* (Baxter & Bethke, 2009 p. 62).

The NRC has taken into account that it might be difficult for teachers to re-orient themselves if they have been used to teach in a certain way for many years. This is one of the reasons why they have chosen to recruit high school graduates rather than teachers already employed in the education sector. It is also unrealistic to expect persons who are not already trained teachers to grasp the complexity of learner-centred methods AND how to apply it in the classroom within a short-term course like the one provided by NRC. Baxter and Bethke furthermore found that teachers expressed that they: *"enjoyed the practical teaching but many teachers did not understand the* [accelerated learning cycle] *or how to implement it in their classes"* (Baxter & Bethke, 2009 p. 62). It seems reasonable to assume that a situation like

this is realistic to expect from high school graduates who have no previous experience with teaching to which they can make references. The NRC is nevertheless given credit for their follow up supervision and training which is extensive compared to other ALPs in Liberia (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). Based on the C-certificate requirements and the doubt raised with regards to the effectiveness of short term training it seems reasonable to conclude that the NRC ALP teacher training component is having a very limited influence in terms of capacity development at the organisational level of the education sector.

In terms of institutional capacity the NRC ALP could ideally have worked towards strengthening the teacher training institutions either directly through formal institutions or indirectly through non-formal institutions like norms and customs. Above it was argued that the ALP to some extent is strengthening the discourse on learner-centred education and this can be understood as a sort of institutional capacity development in the sense that the articulated norm, regarding appropriate teaching and learning methods, have changed regardless of the actual practice. In the literature on capacity development in fragile situations cooperation among implementing partners is emphasised as a means to target all of the levels of society as it is unrealistic to expect one organisation to do this. It is an issue which is raised because implementing partners are often conducting their education programmes independently of each other without regards to any consistency (Sinclair, 2002). In the case of teacher training cooperation between the USAID, who has implemented LTTP, and NRC could have been a way to target the institutional level. The NRC ALP does nonetheless not have any immediate activities relating to this. Rather is seems to have been parallel developments by international organisations that have a certain understanding of appropriate learning methods.

It seems sensible to conclude that the NRC ALP teacher training component is not designed to take the various levels of the society into account. In order to achieve effective results at the organisational level it would have been necessary to increase the training of the teachers or cooperate with other implementing partners. Burde (2004) argues that service-delivery organisations (like the NRC) are not equipped to address the institutional and structural issues, which are required in the post-conflict countries to initiated change, rather they are providing a service which respond to the social and physical needs of disenfranchised groups of society. This is due to contradictions between the international discourses on development to which the service-delivery organisation adheres when applying for funding

and the values as well as standards of the service-delivery organisation (Burde, 2004; Sinclair, 2002). The conflicting demands placed on the service-delivery organisations when implementing their programmes affect their ability to promote reforms. For the NRC ALP teacher training component the reproduction of the discourse on learner-centred education can be seen as adhering to a demand from the donor-side whereas the limited training and the limited number of C-certificate graduates among the NRC ALP teacher can be seen as a result of the priority of the NRC which has been to deliver education to a marginalised group and train teachers for that exact purpose.

8.1.3 Endogenous demands

In the literature on capacity development especially Brinkerhoff (2007) emphasised the importance of taking a departure point in endogenous demands when capacity development is intended. In terms of the quality of teachers it is expressed as an endogenous demand through the goal of the ESP. The MOE is emphasising quality teachers as an important part of the reformation of the education sector and it has been ratified by the requirement of the C-certificate for primary school teachers. In the light of this NRC ALP is responding to an endogenous demand as they provide their teachers with the opportunity to take the C-certificate while working for the NRC. It is nevertheless questionable whether the endogenous desires of the education reform are realistic. As mentioned earlier the ESP goals are very similar to the EFA goals which might indicate that the ESP is reflecting the requirements of the donor rather than what is actually realistic in the context of post-conflict Liberia within the timeframe of ten years (The ESP covers 2010-2020). This situation is due to the international pressure which the international community puts on low-income countries through international declarations like EFA (c.f. introduction). The declarations and agreements paint a picture of how to get out of poverty through increased social and economic development and this is of cause desirable for the governments in the low-income countries (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). In post-conflict countries it may nevertheless be an insurmountable obstacle to overcome due to the generally low capacity in the countries. This is a factor which is often overlooked by the policy makers. In the case of curriculum reforms the level of capacity is also often overlooked as:

> *"Local cultural and contextual realities and capacities as much as implementation requirements seem to be overlooked. This is partly due to the fact that it is not learner-centred education that is attractive to policy makers but the appeal and promise of social change"* (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008 p. 203).

The question of capacity to turn the reformed curriculum into practice is critical for the outcome of the reform. Research shows that in spite of the wide range of curriculum reforms in SSA the teacher-centred approach is still prevailing (Altinyelken, 2010; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). In order for learner-centred education to take root in the African context the teachers need to understand the principles and be motivated to make the change:

> *"For learner-centred education to take root in local African contexts, teachers need to understand the underlying idea, be motivated to change practice, adapt and apply appropriate pedagogies, and have the capacity to do it"* (Elmore in Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008 p. 203).

Based on this it can be concluded that the NRC ALP is responding to an endogenous demand but this demand might not reflect reality in terms of available capacities and hence the component might not lead to capacity development c.f. the previous section on the limited outcome of the teacher training component in terms of strengthening the organisational and institutional capacity of the education sector.

8.1.4 Restoring state functions and legitimacy

In terms of state functions and legitimacy teacher training should be understood as a public good which when provided is supporting the legitimacy of the government. If the public goods are not provided the legitimacy of the government will decrease:

> *"(...) the state is built and maintained through the collective action of the public, but in a fragile state the 'public' is missing or weak. Although the self-serving and market-based provision of goods may be possible, the more public aspects of service delivery tend to crumble or disappear (e.g. vaccinations, school curricula, teacher training, law enforcement and water utilities). This situation will weaken civil society and the legitimacy of government"* (Davies, 2009 p. 12).

If the NRC ALP teacher training component should have developed capacity with regards to the restoration of the state functions and legitimacy the organisational and institutional levels should have been targeted more directly. By doing this the components might have strengthened the TTIs and hence the structures for the national teacher training. The change of discourse, which it was argued above that the NRC ALP is reinforcing, is not leading to significant practical changes and hence the availability of the public goods, in this case teacher training, has not increased. Based on this it seems reasonable to conclude that the NRC ALP teacher training component is not developing capacity which is restoring the state functions or legitimacy in terms of quality teacher education.

8.1.5 Sum up

To sum up on the analysis of capacity developed through the NRC ALP teacher training component it can be concluded that in spite of ALP reinforcing the national discourse on learner-centred pedagogy it is nevertheless questionable how much the training of the ALP teachers will affect the national level of teacher quality. It has become clear from the analysis that the component is only to a limited degree corresponding with the characteristics for capacity development in fragile situations. Based on this it can be concluded that in spite of the NRC following the criteria for the donor intervention it has not lead to a widespread capacity development in relation to quality of teachers. The NRC ALP teacher training component has nevertheless contributed with additional human resources relevant for the education sector in terms of the 84 NRC ALP teachers who have taken the C-certificate. According to Davies (2009) the overall aim of the educational capacity development intervention should be to feed into the national strategies on state building. The increase of a qualified national teacher staff is a part of the reform of the teacher training in Liberia and effective teacher training institutions are important for the reconstruction of the state (Sinclair, 2002). In order for the 84 NRC ALP teachers to be a contribution which is enhancing the sustainable development of the education sector it is nevertheless imperative that the teachers are integrated into the formal education system.

8.2 Integration of the NRC ALP teachers - the perspective of sustainability

One thing is the question of whether the NRC ALP teacher training component is developing capacity in terms of teacher quality. Another perspective which is central for the discussion on sustainability is whether the trained NRC ALP teachers are integrated into the formal education system upon termination of the programme. The NRC is aiming at integrating the teachers into the formal programme and it was one of their reasons for recruiting high school leavers rather than teachers already employed in the education sector. Nevertheless the situation was that during the time the fieldwork was conducted the NRC ALP teachers were still not employed by the MOE[32]. From the perspective of the involved actors in the education sector the reactions to this situation were contradictory in terms of whether they thought the NRC ALP teachers are a contribution to the education sector.

[32] The NRC ALP programme closed the last school in July 2010 and the fieldwork was conducted from September to November 2010

8.2.1 Perceptions of NRC ALP teachers and schools

The CEOs did not see the additional teachers as a contribution to the education sector in opposition to the DEOs, PTAs and head teachers who all in one way or the other expressed that they thought the teachers is a contribution. The CEOs were arguing that because the teachers are not yet on payroll they will leave the area and therefore not do any difference. If they stay and teach there is no way of sanctioning them if they are not doing their job properly because they cannot be hold accountable when they are not paid. The other three groups of actors on the other hand stressed that they see the teachers as a contribution and they try to encourage the teachers to stay while waiting for the payroll procedures to finish.

This contradiction between the CEOs and the three other groups of actors can be understood as two different aspects of the NRC ALP teacher situation. When the DEOs, PTAs and head teachers express that they feel the teachers are a contribution to the education system it could be seen in the light of the fact that many of the ALP teachers are still teaching in spite of them not being on government payroll. In that sense the ALP teachers are fulfilling the role of the teacher in practice. In terms of sustainability this is nevertheless problematic because the teachers will not keep teaching without a salary and the small incentives provided by the communities are not enough to support them. This issue is what is expressed when the CEOs state that the teachers are not a contribution to the education sector because they are not on the government payroll.

In continuation of the issue related to the teachers the question of the NRC ALP schools, which have been built, was also raised. In this regard the CEOs clearly stated that the school buildings were of no use if there are no teachers to teach in them. The PTAs and the head teachers on the other hand emphasised that the school buildings are an important contribution to the education sector. They explained that the NRC has built schools where there were no schools before and they feel that the establishment of schools in those communities is a great contribution. This contradiction in opinions can be understood in the light of the strong symbolic role that education holds. As mentioned earlier education has after the end of the civil war become a high priority within the population. This is in line with the world model on education which for a long time has been perceived to be a panacea and the key to development in all other areas in society (Semali, 2007). Along with the discourse of this world model the world model on learner-centred education exists. Where the first emphasises education as the institution *school* the latter is pointing at the importance of

trained teachers in order to reach the intended results. It seems reasonable to assume that *school* in Liberia might has been synonymous with the school building rather than the actual quality of teaching and hence the actual building symbolises a high value. This statement is based on the post-conflict context in Liberia which has lead to a lack of qualified teachers for at least 14 years. After the war the requirements of qualification might still have been limited as short-term trainings provided by donors have constituted the teacher training (GoL, 2009). Having only a very limited amount of qualified teachers for this long can be assumed to set the norm of teacher qualification at a rather low point. This argument is supported by some of the EOs who expressed that due to the lack of qualified teachers the available teachers become the qualified ones (INT1/CEO/29.09.2010; INT5/DEO12.10.2010). Within this perspective it might not be so important what level of qualification the teacher has as long as someone is teaching. When the CEOs on the other hand emphasises the importance of teachers – in terms of qualified teachers holding a C-certificate – they are representing the second world model and in this perspective the school building in itself is not symbolising the same high value. This situation shows how the world models are on the one hand conflicting with the reality because they are developed in an exogenous context, and on the other hand conflicting with each other because they reflect ideals.

From this analysis it becomes clear that the CEOs and the three other groups of actors are representing very different perspectives on the question to whether the NRC ALP teachers and schools are a contribution to the education sector. The reasons for this might be various but one which seems natural is that the CEOs are managers and administrators at a higher level in the education system than the three other groups of actors and hence have a better insight and understanding of the national education strategy (the ESP) which is emphasising quality teachers. In spite of the broad perception of the NRC ALP teachers being a contribution to the education sector it is nevertheless not sustainable unless they are on the government payroll. The question is why this has not happened in spite of the fact that the ESP is emphasising the need for additional teacher holding a C-certificate in the formal education system.

8.2.2 Getting on the government payroll

From the data three explanations have emerged. The EOs in the ALP Unit expressed that it was the fault of the self-willed CEOs. The CEOs, DEOs, PTAs, head teachers and the NRC supervisors all stated that it was due to heavy bureaucracy. The NRC supervisors

furthermore explained that it was due to a change of practise in recruitment of teachers by the government. All three explanations require some further discussion in order to clarify how it relates to sustainability.

Change of practice

To begin with the latter the practice regarding recruitment of teachers has previously been that new-trained teachers were guaranteed employment upon graduation from the TTIs (GoL, 2009). This practice has changed as a result of the effort to 'clean up' the government payroll and ensure that only teachers actually teaching are receiving salary (GoL, 2009). As stated earlier it has been a great problem that ghost-teachers figures on the payroll and due to economic constraints of the education sector the ghost-teachers to some extend have to be removed before new teachers can be included on the payroll. This situation is contradicting the demand for additional qualified teachers in the education sector which is also expressed in the ESP. The NRC ALP is feeding into the latter of the two initiatives to make the education sector more effective. In relation to this situation it is only the 84 teacher who have the C-certificate which can be taken into account. The rest of the 249 teachers are not falling under the category of qualified teachers as defined by the MOE and should in theory therefore not be employed to teach in the formal education system. Nevertheless the 84 NRC ALP teachers are not employed and this might be due to the demand for cleaning up the payroll. It is not clear how many teachers have been employed since the ESP and the increased focus on the cleaning of the payroll was initiated. None of the interviewees stated that the current situation requests a full stop of teacher employment and based on this it seems fair to assume that teachers are still employed in spite of the demand for clean up of the payroll. Within this perspective there should therefore be no reason for the NRC ALP teachers not to be employed due to the clean up process.

Heavy bureaucracy

The second explanation seems to be a widespread perception of the situation and is pointing at a heavy bureaucracy within the public administration. The procedures of getting on the payroll are long and require the involvement of several ministries – at least both the MOE and the Ministry of Finance. The CEOs do not have the authority to employ teachers themselves and hence employment of teachers nation-wide has to be taken care of in the MOE. With an education sector which is not yet decentralised the bureaucratic procedures in

the MOE becomes important for the further development of the sector because the levels further out in the system depends on it. The procedures of bureaucracy are hence becoming a central issue in relation to the sustainable outcome of the NRC ALP with regards to whether the teachers are integrated into the formal education system. In spite of its contrary outcome in relation to the payroll bureaucracy should be understood as a world model for appropriate public administration. In the Weberian understanding the concept of bureaucracy has played a key role in the rationalisation of the Western society and is believed to be the most efficient and rational way of organising the public administration. The ideal bureaucracy is characterised by;

> *"Hierarchical organization, delineated lines of authority in a fixed area of activity, action taken on the basis of and recorded in written rules, bureaucratic officials need expert training, rules are implemented by neutral officials, career advancement depends on technical qualifications judged by organization, not individuals"* (Swedberg & Agevall, 2005 p.18)

As explained in chapter two the world culture is based on the values of rationality, justice and progress which have its roots in the Western Enlightenment. The problem in Liberia is nonetheless that there is a severe lack of human and financial resources to handle the bureaucracy efficiently. This is an example of how periphery nation states are less likely to adjust the world models. Rather than adapting it to the context, which would need a much more flexible system, the world model of bureaucracy is in this case incorporated in its 'original' design. Because the world model of bureaucracy is too idealistic for the public administration to meet under the current situation the employment procedures are becoming unreasonably slow. Within the world culture theory this refers to *decoupling* because the ideal of the world model is conflicting with the reality (Meyer, et al., 1997). The decoupling of the public administration in terms of the heavy bureaucracy is posing a severe challenge for the sustainability in relation to integration of the teachers on the government payroll. If the teachers are not integrated on the payroll the likelihood of them finding jobs at a private school or choosing a different profession increases.

Mistrust

The final explanation given by the interviewees concerns mistrust between the EOs in the ALP Unit and the CEOs. This mistrust was expressed in several cases and refers primarily to the capabilities and reliability of the CEOs. Davies (2009) and Brinkerhoff (2007) are

stressing the importance of trust in order to restore the peace. This can be trust in many relationships for instance between population and government, but is can also be the relationship between the levels of administrators in the education sector. The existing mistrust is interesting in relation to the process of decentralisation because this process requires a high level of accountability among the levels in the sector. The matter of accountability will be treated later in this study. Here the important point is that the mistrust exists and should be taken into consideration as a matter of the post-conflict context by the implementing partner. In relation to a sustainability perspective it is of the greatest importance to keep the situation stable as deterioration into conflict is hampering all attempts to increase the sustainable development of the education sector.

To sum up on the sustainability perspective of the NRC ALP teacher training component it becomes clear that the reason why the teachers are not integrated on the government payroll might be a matter of the strong world model of bureaucracy and hence a structural challenge. In conclusion it can hence be argued that the NRC ALP component of teacher training is contributing with capacity development, but the outcome in terms of sustainable development of the education sector might be rather limited due to the structural problems.

9 Administration & Management

In the ESP it is stated that the aim is to: "*Outline the processes through which the Ministry of Education is to manage an efficient and accountable decentralized system able to deliver relevant learning and training opportunities of quality"* (GoL, 2009 p. 159). The NRC ALP component on support to administration and management is feeding into this goal by supporting the managerial and administrative skills of the EOs at the county and district levels. This should be seen as an attempt to improve the sustainability of the programme as a part of the phase out strategy. Increased capacity at the county and district levels is an important factor in the overall decentralisation process which has been initiated in the education sector. The decentralisation process can be characterised as a desire to enhance and achieve:

> *"(...) 'political liberalism'* [which is] *a wider distribution of authority associated with a move towards greater democracy, and 'deconcentration', which is where a system characterised by bureaucratic centralism now wishes to transfer some decision-making to local officials to create more efficiency*" (Lauglo in Davies, Harber, & Dzimadzi, 2003 p. 141).

In the process of decentralisation control is closely linked to capacity as it requires a certain level of capacity to carry out the decentralised tasks of the administration. Moreover capacity is important in order to legitimise the loss of control which the central administration experiences in the process. If the levels further out in the system do not have the capacity to handle the tasks it might hamper the decentralisation process or even result in a re-centralisation (Chikoko, 2009; Davies, et al., 2003). In relation to this the dimension of vertical accountability within the education sector becomes central as:

> *"Decentralisation can only succeed in a reciprocal relationship between the upper and lower tiers of the system in which the former is willing to relinquish some of its power and the latter is able to utilise such power"* (Chikoko, 2009 p. 210).

In the following the component will be analysed based on the capacity development criteria of the donor intervention (table 2.1). The aim is to analyse whether the NRC is implementing the ALP in line with the criteria and whether this is leading to development of

capacity relevant for the education sector. Based on this a discussion of the sustainability perspectives will follow.

9.1 The NRC component of support to administration and management

The NRC ALP component of support to administration and management is sharing some of the criteria which are outlined for the donor intervention (table 2.1) in terms of creating a fundament for the programme to develop capacity. The component is first of all feeding into the overall strategies outlined in the ESP for decentralisation. The component consists of workshops and training of the EOs at the district and county level in administrative and managerial skills as well as secondment of one NRC supervisor to each EO during the last months of the NRC ALP. These initiatives could be seen as a way to strengthen the two levels which are stated to be a key priority in order to meet the national education priorities (GoL, 2009). The component can also be argued to be context specific simply because it is included in the programme. Support to administration and management is not necessarily a part of the ALP but has been included here due to a generally weak capacity. On the other hand the timeframe of the component can nevertheless be argued to be insufficient as the real time which the NRC supervisors spent with the EOs was limited to a few months. Based on this it can be argued that the component is not context specific enough as it takes longer than a few months to establish new routines and practice new skills. In terms of cooperation it has not been documented that NRC is cooperating with any implementing partners, local NGOs or the EOs in the ministry within the scope of this component.

Based on this it seems to be rather limited how well the component is corresponding with the criteria of the donor intervention. As the component can be argued to be an attempt to cross the limits of the service-delivery mode and increase capacity of the involved actors it is nevertheless interesting to continue the analysis and discover whether the component is leading to any capacity development and if it does not what the obstacles are. In the following the component will be analysed based on the four capacity development characteristics of fragile situations each at a time (see table 2.2.).

9.2 Endogenous demand

The component can be seen as a response to an endogenous demand in the sense that it is expressed as a strategy to achieve education priorities (GoL, 2009). The integration of

decentralisation as a reform in the ESP can be understood in the light of the general tendencies regarding decentralisation and reforms. Decentralisation as reform of education sectors are widely used in sub-Saharan African countries (Chikoko, 2009; Davies, et al., 2003). It is seen as a key in educational planning and management:

> *"Decentralisation is one of the most important phenomena to have affected educational planning in the last fifteen years. Who should make decisions regarding public schooling? Who should pay for it? Such questions have become the objects of passionate debates"* (Caillods in Davies, et al., 2003 p. 140).

Davies et al. (2003) even argue that decentralisation has become a panacea in relation to governmental functions. There seems to be no doubt that the idea of decentralisation can be seen as representing a world model.

From the interviews the imperative of decentralisation does nevertheless not seem to be echoed in a broad sense. The CEOs responded in a practical manner as they would not have to go to Monrovia all the time if the sector was more decentralised. In the ALP Unit the EOs thought it was a good idea but had no insights in the process. The NRC supervisors also expressed the practical dimension and furthermore thought it would be a good lesson for the EOs to get more responsibility. This rather limited articulation of the decentralisation discourse suggests that the process is subject to a serious decoupling. This argument is supported by the notion in the ESP that the organisational structures for decentralisation are in place in terms of EOs at the county and district levels, but the actual legislation in terms of delegating responsibility to the 'lower' levels is absent (GoL, 2009). In terms of capacity development it can hence be concluded that the component is responding to an endogenous demand by training the EOs at the district and county levels which ideally makes them better suitable for the responsibilities a decentralisation requires. On the other hand the endogenous demand might be a reflection of the isomorphic world culture dynamics rather than an endogenously developed demand (Stomquist, 2007). A third conclusion could be that as the process of decentralisation is not followed up by a legal framework the political will might not yet be there to give up power and control.

9.3 Process between levels

In terms of capacity development at the individual level there seems to be no doubt that the EOs feel they have learned new skills. They explained in the interviews that they had gained a new understanding of their role as administrators as well as learned how to improve

their practise in relation to record keeping and reporting (c.f. chapter 6.4.1). The latter is important for the overall accountability of the sector as keeping records and reporting from the 'lower' levels to the central level is a core responsibility if the education sector is decentralised. There is nevertheless an important point which should be raised in relation to the cooperation between the EOs and the NRC supervisors. The intention with the cooperation was as a part of the phase out strategy to strengthen the EOs in their administration and management. Several of the EOs stated in the interviews that they discussed with the NRC supervisor and developed new forms for supervision. Nevertheless there seemed to be a prevalence of responses which indicated that rather than strengthening the EOs in their work the NRC supervisors were doing the job for the EOs - or at least filling in for them- in order for the EOs to be able to actually manage to supervise all the schools to which they are supposed. Most of the DEOs stated that they divided the supervision between themselves and the NRC supervisors. In relation to capacity development and sustainability, which were the actual aims of the component, this situation is critical. When the NRC phases out there might still be DEOs who have no means of transport and therefore cannot make the supervision. There might be no one else who is taking over the supervision which the NRC supervisors took care of and hence the supervision of the schools might become increasingly irregular. When asked about this issue the NRC supervisors stated that the main problem was the lack of time as a longer timeframe would have allowed the schools to get used to supervision and hence they would expect it and be one time and so forth. The argument was based on the idea that 'you never know when the supervisor will be there and therefore you better always do you job properly'. This might be a reasonable argument but it might also indicate that there is an issue in relation to the working culture or more important in this case: a lack of resources. This lack is with regards to human resources but particularly with regards to means of transportation which all interviewees stated as the main obstacle for them to carry out their job.

With regards to the organisational level this is particularly important for the decentralisation process as:

> *"The agenda advocates that countries must exercise democracy and 'good' governance. If 'good' governance is to prevail, decision-making power must be spread across the entire organisation. Such participatory democracy is presumed to also lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness in the system (Schlechty, 1991; Harber and Muthukrishna, 2000; Astiz et al., 2002)"* (Chikoko, 2009 p. 202).

It is nevertheless questionable how much the component has managed to target the organisational level. The most important indicator in this regard is the critical expressions of the EO in the ALP Unit. When they state that they find the CEOs to be the '*most irregular people'* it is showing that the capacity which the EO at the district and county level feel they have developed is not affecting the organisation in terms of an improved flow of information between the levels. At least it is not recognised by the EOs in the ALP Unit. This contradiction of perceptions is not unusual in the decentralisation process but it might have severe consequences for the progress:

> *"The locus of decision-making power in any given area seems to pose serious challenges in an education system. On the one hand, in attempting to counter bad practices, central government is often left with no option other than to limit the scope of decentralisation. On the other, those in the grassroots of the system, such as schools feel disempowered and disrespected when authority is withdrawn from them. This scenario tends to create a 'we' and 'them' culture between the lower and the higher tiers of the same education system"* (Chikoko, 2009 p. 208).

The EOs in the ALP Unit, are very likely to take the here stated point of view on the situation and might hence not in reality be working towards the decentralisation process. When the component is not targeting the organisational level it is not taking this challenge into account.

With regards to the institutional level the component does not seem to have developed any capacity. It is nevertheless worth noticing here that the changed understanding in relation to their roles, which the EOs at the district and county level expressed, is important in terms of values and norms. Due to the limited timeframe it might not have been grounded as an actual change of norms but beginning to understand the range of responsibilities required at the these levels is a first step towards developing the capacity needed for the central government to be willing to give up some of the control they currently have.

Based on this is seems reasonable to conclude that in spite of the positive reception the component has received by the EOs at the county and district levels the component has only had a limited out come in terms of targeting capacity development as a process between the societal levels.

9.4 Process of change

The decentralisation process is in itself a process of change as the power and responsibilities are re-organised. If the decentralisation process is carried out in Liberia it will be a tremendous process of change in terms of changing previous behaviour which has contributed to conflict. As described in the chapter four the country has been ruled from the capital with little influence and development in the hinterland. This situation suggests two things. On the one hand the organisation of the education sector with EOs at the county and district levels might be superficial as these have never had any actual influence. On the other hand it could be reasonable to assume that if the development and control has been clustered around Monrovia there might have been little control with the rural areas and hence there might have been a certain level of autonomy in relation to educational matters. In order to consolidate any of these arguments it would nevertheless be necessary to know more about the previous organisation of the education sector – e.g. for how long the ministry has been *vertically integrated*. This information has nonetheless not been available.

Offhand the component can be understood as contributing to the process of change due to the intrinsic nature of decentralisation because the component is training the EOs in skills relevant for the process. Nevertheless there seems to be a challenge in this case. The training of the EOs has, as presented above, been important at the individual level because the EOs feel they have gained a new understanding of their role as well as improved practices in relation to reporting and record keeping. The development of the administrative and managerial capacity has nevertheless not been approached as a process between levels. This finding is important for the perspective of capacity development as a process of change because targeting the individual level does not seem to lead to a change when the discourse on decentralisation is not being strongly articulated c.f. above. When decentralisation is neither strongly implemented due to the decoupling nor targeted at several of the societal levels the process of change seems to be rather limited.

9.5 Restoring state functions and legitimacy

From the strategies and plans for the education sector it becomes clear that there is an ideal regarding accountability. This ideal can be understood as a reflection of another world model namely, *good governance*. Good governance is a commonly used concept in the international development aid business. It referrers to governmental decision-making characterised by transparency, accountability, broad participation and efficiency (UNESCAP,

2011). The template for the good governance has emerged from the Western societies and therefore these are the ideal:

> *"Because the most "successful" governments in the contemporary world are liberal democratic states concentrated in Europe and the Americas, those countries' institutions often set the standards by which to compare other states' institutions"* (Khan, 2004 p. 65).

Good governance is, like bureaucracy, a strong world model and it is carried through central actors like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UN. Good governance is an ideal but there is nevertheless a consensus on the necessity of striving towards the ideal in order to ensure sustainable development (UNESCAP, 2011). This is a clear example on how world models are developed and carried through organisations and agencies based on the science and the researchers which are connected to them. Within the framework of World Culture Theory these are representing the rationalised others who to a large extend are defining the world models (Meyer, et al., 1997). Good governance and in particular the accountability aspect of it is important for the restoration of state functions and legitimacy in the post-conflict country.

The references to the ideas of good governance which is included in the ESP can be seen as an expression of rational actor hood in the sense that accountability is believed to be imperative in a rational approach to progress and development c.f. the world model and hence when the education strategies are adhering to the principles it supports the impression of rational actor hood. Decoupling nevertheless occurs when the ideal is continuously expressed but not nearly supported with actual practice c.f. the lack of legislation to support the decentralisation process. In terms of capacity development this means that the training of the EOs and the close cooperation between the EOs and the NRC supervisors in the phase out process is not restoring the state functions or legitimacy because of the decoupling. In order for the training to increase the accountability between the levels the link to the MOE should have been stronger c.f. the above described close link between capacity and control.

9.6 Sum up from the perspective of sustainability

To sum up on the capacity developed through the NRC ALP component on support to administration and management it can be concluded that it has severe consequences for the outcome of the component that it has an unrealistic timeframe and that it is not targeting capacity development as a process between societal levels. The short time frame has also been

pointed at by the NRC supervisors as a main obstacle for the future prospects and sustainability of the initiated changes which the training has caused in terms of changed approaches. All of the NRC supervisors agreed that in order for the ALP to have a long lasting effect the NRC should stay longer. In general they agreed that the CEOs and DEOs are willing to maintain the changes because they do not want to fall back and every district wants to develop but they had their doubts about the reality. The main argument which they expressed was that more time is needed to integrate the changed practices. Two of the NRC staff expressed it like this: "*So to adapt the system into those people NRC needs to stay because it take time - otherwise it will go back to square one"* (INT3/NRC/22.10.10) and *"We could see even some impact but it just lasts for some time and then it shades away and just becomes a shadow of itself so it needs some time to adapt and become fully integrated"* (INT2/NRC/26.10.10). The DEOs expressed in general optimism regarding the continuation of the good practises they had learnt from NRC but they also agreed that more time would be a benefit for the development of the education sector. This indicates that the EOs feel that the training has given them useful tools. It is nevertheless problematic for the sustainability perspective that the capacity development has only happened at the individual levels in terms of training. Davies et al. (2003) argues that staff turnover can be a great obstacle for the sustainability of the decentralisation process:

> *"However, absolutely crucial in terms of sustainability is the issue of high staff turnover, affecting the work of both offices. It is caused by a number of interlocking factors: the general shortage of qualified staff meaning that specialised people are in demand elsewhere; the importance of grading, status and remuneration meaning that people are always on the lookout for better opportunities; family and other commitments"* (Davies, et al., 2003 p. 151).

More important, than the risk of staff-turn over, might be the structural challenges and the lack of political will to use the capabilities which has actually been developed. As long as power and responsibility is not delegated to the county and district levels there might be rather limited prospects for the further process of decentralisation.

10 Concluding remarks

Throughout this study the prospects of NRC ALP to develop capacity relevant for the three education reforms in Liberia has been analysed and discussed. This has been done in order to examine the possibilities of contributing to bridging the post-conflict gap in the aid architecture by increasing the focus on capacity development in the post-conflict response by humanitarian organisations. As capacity development is considered to be very difficult to do in practice it has been central for the study to examine what obstacles there have been for the NRC ALP to develop capacity in the case of Liberia. In the following a few concluding remarks based on the analyses will be elaborated.

In order to conclude on the extent to which the NRC ALP has a potential to develop capacity relevant for the education sector it is worth noticing that the NRC ALP is in line with the characteristics of capacity development in fragile situations in terms of: responding to endogenous demands by feeding into overall strategies and is, in line with this, reinforcing the processes of change within the three reform processes. All three characteristics can be understood in the light of the world culture dynamics. The endogenous demands which have been expressed through the ESP goals reflect world models - The idea that education leads to development and the consequent goal of UPE: The belief in the necessity of learner-centeredness as a means to develop the skills needed in the rebuilding process and the reform of teacher training following this: The conviction of the importance of engaged of civil society as a means to reach UPE as well as building up a democratic society: and The confidence in decentralisation being the appropriate way to administer and manage the public sector - are all expressions of these world models which are currently dominating the global discourse on education and development. Besides being endogenous demands from the MOE the world models are also corresponding with the ideals and values of NRC and therefore their ALP components can feed into the processes of change in the recovering education sector in Liberia.

The implication for the NRC ALP components in this regard is nevertheless that the endogenous demands might not be realistic taking the current capacity of the sector into account. In spite of the consistency between *demand* and *supply* in terms of which goals should be aimed at the NRC ALP is failing to develop capacity which supports the above described processes in a sustainable way. From a world culture perspective this can be

explained as an outcome of the isomorphic process and the decoupling which happens because the goals are exogenously developed and hence developed in a culture and a context which is very different from the context of Liberia. This becomes clear as the main obstacle for the NRC ALP is that it is not reaching the organisational level of the education sector in areas relevant for the three reform processes. When the NRC ALP is only to a limited degree developing capacity in other areas this is still related to the organisational level. The organisational capacity development becomes central because the world models are requiring a massive organisational restructuring to be reached. In the case of Liberia, as a post-conflict country, the obstacles to overcome the restructuring might be even greater than in other low income countries, because of the general lack of capacity and the lack of previous strong educational structures.

In the eagerness of making the development aid as effective as possible it can be concluded that due to the global/local dynamics the current aid architecture is biding its own tail when international agreements like MDG and EFA have been developed and world models based on these have become the guideline for the implementation of education programmes in the least developed countries (Lewin, 2007). Through the current change of approach to countries affected by conflict and fragility these goals and world models are increasingly becoming determining for education in post-conflict countries as well. The implementing organisations are strengthening this development through their education programmes as it has been the case with the NRC ALP which, as illustrated in this study, has components corresponding with the world models. It can nevertheless be argued based on the findings that in the process of responding to endogenous demands, which are based on exogenous goals, the NRC ALP is not supporting the reform processes through capacity development but are rather reinforcing unrealistic goals. This implies that the world models themselves are a major obstacle for the sustainable development of the education sector in Liberia because they are blindly accepted by all of the involved actors.

This perspective poses a great challenge for the post-conflict transition and the role of the humanitarian organisations in this process. Rather than striving towards streamlining the aid through globally developed goals the context and the capacities of the country in question should be guiding the design and implementation of educational programmes (Lewin, 2007). For the case of Liberia this implies considering whether learner-centred teaching is at all a desirable aim when the students in the schools form heterogeneous groups which any teacher

no matter the level of qualification would find extremely challenging to meet in a learner-centred matter. Or it implies considering whether decentralisation is at all the right approach to administration in a country which has been divided throughout history and torn apart by a decade long civil war. Within this perspective the central issue is not whether the humanitarian organisations to a greater extent should include capacity development as a part of the emergency and post-conflict response, but rather it concerns the very core of comparative education namely, whether unconscious educational transfer will ever lead to the desired outcome. Or as Michael Sadler formulated it in 1900:

> *"We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and picking off flowers from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant…"* (Sadler 1900 p. 49 in Crossley & Watson, 2003 p. 6).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guide (DEOs)

How is Accelerated Learning Programs as a donor intervention in an emergency situation contributing to a sustainable development of the emerging education sector in Liberia?

- In what ways has ALP strengthened the educational institutions in terms of individual, organisational and institutional capacity?

Introduction:

- Self introduction
- Studies
- Timeframe & recording
- Questions?

Opening Q:

-How have you been involved in the ALP?

-How long have you been DEO?

- How many ALP schools have you had in the district and are any left?

- Are there any other ALP providers in the district?

-Have you learned anything new from the ALP approach?

-Have you had any training with NRC?

Spill over of T/L methods:

- When you are supervising the schools, do you see any remarkable differences between regular teachers and former ALP teachers?

-Have any of the teachers been turned over to the regular schools in your district?

-Do you see a spill over effect/do the ALP teachers inspire the regular teachers?

M&E:

-Have you had any M&E training with NRC?

-What did you learn?

-Are you using it in your daily work?

-Does that mean that you have changed the ways M&E is being done in your district?

-Can you continue with the new ways of monitoring when NRC has phased out completely in December?

ALP trained teachers:
-How many ALP teachers have been trained in your district?

-Have they all been integrated into the formal schools?

-Are they on payroll?

-Do you think they will stay in the district?

-Does this mean that the ALP teachers are a positive contribution to your district?

PTAs and their influence on DEO job:
-Where there PTAs before ALP in your district? ´

-Do you experience that the PTAs have been strengthened with ALP?

-Do the PTAs in any ways influence your job?

-Has this influence increased during the last years and do you think it is due to the NRC focus?

Organisational structures:
-Have you had any training in administrative topics by NRC?

-What did you learn?

-If yes have this lead to changes in the administration of the DEO office?

- Is this changes that can maintain after the NRC exit?

Role of the DEO & CEO/MOE/PTAs/HT:
-In relation to ALP have you had anything to do with the national ALP unit?

- What kind of changes can you initiate in your district?

-The things you have learned from NRC/ALP with e.g. M&E or the teacher issue – can you implement them in your district or does the CEO have to approve first?

-What is your relation to the principals?

- Do you feel that NRC presence have changed anything in the power relation/communication between DEO & MOE/DEO & CEO/DEO & HT?

Attitude towards education:
-Is it a problem in your district that children have to work rather than go to school?

-Has this changed with the flexible ALP?

-Has it maintained even now that ALP is closed? Did you see too young/old children in the ALP classes?

-Why do you think that is?

-Are there more girls in the schools now than before ALP?

-Has it been a problem with young mothers dropping out of school?

-Do you see more young mothers in the schools after ALP?

-Does this mean that you have experienced a change in the attitude towards education among the parents in your district?

Other Qs:
-What do you think is the greatest difference before ALP and now?

-What do you think is the greatest challenge for the remaining ALP schools in your district?

Appendix B: List of Interviews

Ministry of Education

INT1/MOE/15.10.2010

INT2/MOE/18.10.2010

INT3/MOE/18.10.2010

County Education Officers

INT1/CEO/29.09.2010

INT2/CEO/01.10.2010

District Education Officers

INT1/DEO/12.10.2010

INT2/DEO/13.10.2010

INT3/DEO/06.10.2010

INT4/DEO/11.10.2010

INT5/DEO/12.10.2010

Parent-Teacher Associations

INT1/PTA/08.10.2010

INT2/PTA/13.10.2010

INT3/PTA/20.10.2010

Heat Teachers

INT1/HT/21.10.2010

INT2/HT/20.10.2010

NRC Supervisors

INT1/NRC/22.10.2010

INT2/NRC/26.10.2010

INT3/NRC/22.10.2010

INT4/NRC/22.10.2010